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DELICATE CRIMES

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS.

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**CRIMES.**

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C. H. E. S.



# DELICATE CRIMES.

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS.

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*A.* E pur in tanto

E sì grave fallir contro la legge

Non ho peccato, ed Innocente sono.

*N.* Contro la legge, di natura forse

Honhai, Ninfa peccato: ama se piace.

Ma ben hai tu peccato in contro quella

Degli uomini, e del ciel: ama se lice.

GUERINI IL PASTOR FIDO.

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VOLUME SECOND.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for S. HOOPER, No. 25. Ludgate-hill.

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MDCCLXXVII.

# DELICATE CRIMES.

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS.

A. E. per in tanto  
E il grave fallo contro la legge  
Non ho peccato, ed innocente sono.  
M. Contino la legge di natura forse  
Hanno, Miele peccato, e non lo pino.  
Mi peccato in tanto in tanto quella  
Della legge di natura.



VOLUME SECOND.

L O N D O N :

Printed by S. Hooper, No. 21, Ludgate Hill.

1847.

## DELICATE CRIMES.

## LETTER XLIV.

From the Count of ST. ALBIN to the  
Marchioness de SYRCE.

**I**T is no more a mortal that writes to you ; you have created me a new being ; you have transmitted to me yours. I keep the bounds that divide us ; I see you, I talk to you, I hear you, I press you in my arms, I die upon your bosom ; all my senses shudder, all my thoughts burn ; but it is my heart only that enjoys. It is there, that happiness outlives pleasure ; that desire retreats, and delicacy stands ready to supply me with all the arguments

necessary to plead my pardon. But why accuse myself? Bless'd as I have been, can I be culpable?

Oh! transports till now untasted, ecstatic union of all delights, all-exquisite ideas! Virtue overcome by tenderness; the tear of innocence wiped off by love! raptures that give a fore-taste of celestial bliss, continue to possess me, occupy my memory without ceasing, and keep for ever before my eyes the charms of the angel I adore, such as they are engraved in my soul.

You, that nothing can eclipse, that nothing can equal; you, that are measured by so false a standard, and whose real excellence the world is so little acquainted with, honour with your approbation the sincere expressions of a heart, penetrated by gratitude and love. Of what charms, what treasures, have you made me master! Such beauty! such delicacy! But it has nothing to fear; where the sentiment enjoys all secrecy, all silence, it draws round itself a sacred veil, which nothing gross is permit-

permitted to pass ; it knows all the value of a voluptuous reserve ; and tranquillizes modesty even in the arms of enjoyment.

At this moment, what are you doing ? Are those lovely eyes, in which my destiny is written, closed in a soft slumber ? and does a favourable dream represent me at your feet, at once a conqueror and a slave ? When I had quitted you—what do I say ?—when I had torn myself from you ; when you commanded me to fly you, you trembled, and left the place of my triumph, the sanctuary of my joys, rather like a victim than an idolatrous lover. You sighed ; I saw your eyes swimming in tears ; in tears ! oh Heavens ! banish, I beseech you, banish every inquietude from your breast, where all should be calm and secure, as it is free from stain ! For me, I wake to think of you : I will not trust to dreams the care of my felicity.

I send this by a special messenger : to-morrow morning you will receive it. To-morrow morning ! but what is that to me ? Come, to-morrow noon, which I



hope will bring me your dear answer. Existence will be painful to me till I have it in my hands; such is my amorous impatience; and yet, when I get, I shall be afraid to open it.

## LETTER XLV.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**I** AM mad, or shall shortly become so. How shall I escape the reproaches of my heart? They are not to be endured. By what authority did you force the asylum, where I had taken shelter? I fled you; that was sufficient to explain myself; that was sufficient to let you know that I was not yet lost to a sense of virtue and my duty. I have violated all.

What were your encouragements? Had I ever told you I loved? and if I had told you so, though less guilty than you are at present; would you not still have much to answer for? Before you obtained

an avowal of my love, you ravished the proof. Where was my guardian angel at that moment? It looks as if there was a fatality in my misfortunes. I abhor, I detest you. I tremble in pronouncing your name. Never, never let me see you more.

Yet, what do I say? I banish you from my sight? yes, I would banish you; but can I hate you? Have I the force to declare it? The one crime draws on another. No; I loved you, (it is from the midst of remorse, and the most cruel agitations, that the cry of a heart goes forth, which has no longer any thing to hide or discover) I loved you even in the moment when you should have been most my aversion; and it is you, you that I adore, without being much worthy of it; that have abused my kindness, broke your promises, resisted my prayers: yet, wherefore should I blame? the fault was mine: I relied upon my strength, and it abandoned me.

What misfortunes do I foresee! where-  
ever I turn my eyes, I behold myself sur-  
rounded by nothing else. I cannot think  
without horror of the husband I have  
betrayed: for it is in vain I recur to his  
faults; if they restored me the right to  
dispose of my heart, my person was still  
his; his title there was sacred, not to be  
invalidated; and, by infringing that title,  
I have broke the great tie that linked me  
to society! from which I am now an out-  
cast. See, then, to what you have re-  
duced me! Virtue, honour, all that was,  
or ought to have been dear to me, I  
have sacrificed all, even to the right I had  
to your esteem.

Satisfied to love you, to see you, to pass  
my days in wishing for, in expecting, in  
thinking of you; the pride of having no-  
thing outwardly to reproach myself with,  
softened the pains of my self-denials. I  
could lift my eyes to you, and turn them  
on myself without blushing. Your heart  
was all I desired; and the purity of my  
sentiments were their excuse; but you  
would

would not be contented till you extorted from me what I was forbid to grant, what I hoped never to grant ; and now, O God! now I am guilty, I am miserable ; and I deserve it.

P. S. Your letter, which I this moment receive, has had I know not what effect upon me. I cannot express it. Must I, then, repeat my impetuosity ? Where is my anger gone ? A cloud, which I fear to dissipate, comes to cover your faults ; and I have no more the courage, or will, to reproach you. But may I hope, then, that you love me ? that you will still continue to have a value for me ? I fear to see you ; I dare not look at you ; and yet, without seeing you, I cannot live. I am yours, yours for ever—and I weep.

It is eight o'clock. I have not lain down all night. The people will wonder what is the matter with me. I am under strange anxieties. I am at a distance from you ; could I hide myself in your arms, methinks I should be less unhappy. I have just re-read your letter ; I am going to

read it again ; it affects, it comforts me. Ah! if your transports do but rise from a worthy source!

## LETTER XLVI.

From the Count de St. ALBIN, to the Marchioness de SYRCE

**W**HAT a letter! it prolongs my ravishment; it adds to my enthusiasm. But you weep, you weep, and it is I that occasion your tears!

Behold before you a suppliant, imploring his pardon, without ceasing to justify his crime. I was no longer master of my transports; I was led astray, bewildered in the wildness of my desires. I saw nothing but you, their object; I could hear nothing but you. Had thunder fallen, had lightning flashed round me, it would have lighted me to my happiness, rather than have daunted my ardour.

Plant not thorns in the breast, where you have first taught love to grow. Your grief



grief throws me into despair. You an outcast from society ! you ! who are the ornament of it ! Tell me, too timid, too delicate as you are, what is the tie you have broken ? That which united you to a husband, whose indifference rendered him unworthy of you ? He forfeited his title to your person when he forfeited your heart.

Are women to have only the melancholy virtue of being faithful to perfidious partners ? Has religion ordered them, in the bloom of all their perfections, to crawl to the foot of an altar, there to seal their slavery, and take an oath to be unhappy ? Such prejudices are barbarous, are unnatural, and ought to be surmounted.

Dry your tears, most heavenly woman ; break through the clouds that encompass you ; and abandon yourself without fear to the impressions of a tender heart. Those that are the most animated, the most dear, ought to be the most sacred.

Fear not that you have lost any thing in my eyes. Could you look into the breast where you sovereignly reign, you would see, on the contrary, the progress you make there. Your letter is a ray of light, that has penetrated to the inmost recesses of my soul. Set, then, your mind at rest; in making me happy, you have acquired glory, instead of losing it. Such a weakness as yours is no disgrace. She that yields as you have done, ought to be proud of yielding. I loved you before my triumph; but since, I adore you.

Once more, cease to think yourself criminal; and make haste to him, who lives but to devote himself to you. Do you feel no emotions that impel you towards me? You say you would be happier in my arms; yet you suffer them to open, to receive you in vain. The place where you are, nourishes your melancholy fancies. Return to Paris, I beseech you, and avoid not my eyes! you will meet with nothing there but the most tender love.

L E T-

## LETTER XLVII.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

“MY letter has penetrated you with  
“a ray of light;”—that is as much  
as to say, that you have conceived a pre-  
judice against me. I imagined so; and  
who knows but you may have taken for  
love, desires which you never would have  
encouraged, but from a certain idea of my  
easiness?

Great God! have I given myself to a  
man, who received the gift as prostitution!  
no, it is not possible. Had I possessed you  
with a transient inclination only, you  
would not have endeavoured to inspire  
me with sentiment. For what? I will  
love you then, adore you; let the cruel  
and perfidious world talk as it will. As  
it judges, without knowing me; it is un-  
just, without making me angry. But you,  
if you dare suspect me a moment—

But why should I endeavour to make myself unhappy by surmises? Let us come back to your letter. You desire my return to Paris. Well. But I dread it; and yet, I know not how it is, this retreat, which appeared so agreeable to me, begins to wear an altered aspect. All the objects I meet, bring my folly to my remembrance.

I must needs visit yesterday the labyrinth, the fatal labyrinth: but I could not sustain the view. Those arbors, where I used to retire to vent, in secret, the sighs of love, are become dark and formidable shades, since they have been the grave of my innocence. Methought, on entering, I heard a threatening voice, which reproached me with my crime, and denounced punishment. This you will say, was fancy: be it so; yet I have, I know not what, forebodings that tell me I shall see no more happy days. Nay, methinks I am already a creature forsaken. Will you do what you can to prevent these ideas from being ominous? Alas! into  
whose

whose hands can I put my fate but yours?

You, then, who are the cause of my tears, and render them precious to me; you, who are at present the master of my reputation, receive also into your keeping my destiny and my life. You have undone me; you would be satisfied with nothing less than my honour, my all; and I am still more sensible of your felicity than my own loss; nay, should the value of so many sacrifices be one day or other diminished in your eyes, you can never rob me of the consolation to think, that I once made you happy. For reckon not upon my levity; my weakness itself is the pledge of my constancy. You may render me miserable; but nothing from this moment can make me love you less, not even your ingratitude.

While I write, I am struck with a most agreeable object. It is a family of deer; a beautiful stag, with a doe by his side as white as milk, that suckles a young fawn. They are just opposite my window, which is open, and eye me from time to time,  
and



and then turn to each other, and seem to converse. There is something singularly tender and delicate in the stag's manner of regarding his female; and she appears to be sensible of it. How charming are the lines of my favourite Guarini! and how applicable upon the present occasion! I believe I can remember them:

Oh fortunate voi fere selvagge.

A cui, l'alma natura

Non diè legge in amar, se non d'amore;

Legge umana, inumana,

Che dai per pena de l'amar la morte.

Se'l peccar è sì dolce

E'l non peccar sì necessario, o troppo.

Imperfetta natura,

Che repugni a la legge;

O troppo dura legge,

Che la natura offendi;

Ma che? poco ama Altrai, ch'il morir teme.

Adieu. Cease to endeavour to draw me from this place. Talk to me no more upon that terrifying subject. I will always avoid, though I can never forget you. It is true, by meeting you, I must reproach you with my wrongs; but, should

should I not be in danger of new? Ah! I love you too well, to expose myself to the peril, the fatality of seeing you.

## L E T T E R XLVIII.

From the Duc de CLERMONT to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**H**APPILY I am disinterested; the pleasure of having done well is the most precious recompence of a generous mind; and ingratitude has no effect upon generosity. It is an age since every thing has been concluded between the Marchioness and you. Thanks to me, you are in full beatitude. You ought even already to see, forming at a distance, the storms of a rupture; but I am out of the secret; you neither see me, nor write to me; I am obliged to guess all; and while you are buried in the calm of enjoyment, represent you to the public. Well, no matter; it tickles my pride; my work will not remain unfinished. Be easy. The  
adven-

adventure is known in almost all the societies, where it is necessary it should spread itself: not a page at Court but has it by the end.

Yesterday, at a house where I supped with thirty people, I passed it from hand to hand as far as I could. They even marked the woman you were to have after the Marchioness. I will give you the list. Well, Monsieur le Comte, is this a diligence that sufficiently shows my attention? After this, I cannot believe you so barbarous as to separate my zeal from the confidence so justly its due. And how many interesting particulars must he necessarily have to communicate, who is advanced in the intimacy of a woman apt to open her mind, and one that will suffer an analysis? I hope you will satisfy me upon this article. It is, besides, indispensably necessary that I should see you, to determine the duration of your intrigue, and the taste in which it ought to be determined. Let us endeavour to avoid the beaten track.

The

The Dutcheſs de Clanville, who ought naturally to ſall to you after the Marchionefs, is at preſent drinking the waters at Pyrmonſt; for which reaſon, I would adviſe you to keep the one till the other returns; unleſs you chuſe, in the mean time, to amuſe yourſelf with a dancer, or an actreſs; which will be a delicious tale for ſcandal; and cauſe a *hubbub*, that it is not amiſs now and then to excite. We will conſider this matter at our firſt interview.

Adieu, Monſieur le Comte. You are in a brilliant poſſeſſion; and if you fail to make the moſt of it, you will be unpardonable.

A B I L

## A BILLET

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Duc de CLERMONT.

**Y**OU have most cruelly deceived me;  
more perhaps than you will easily  
believe, or I chuse to say. Madame de  
Syrçè is far from resembling the picture  
you gave me of her. Notwithstanding  
your prejudices and your endeavours, she  
has found the method to engage my  
esteem; and whatever indiscretions you  
are guilty of, you may depend upon it, I  
shall disavow. I am only her friend; but  
I will fulfil the character to my utmost;  
and I repeat it, wherever you accuse her,  
I will contradict you. I consider your last  
letter as a pleasantry; but should it hap-  
pen to be any thing more, I beg you will  
observe what I say, and learn to respect,  
for the future, a woman, of whom I de-  
clare myself the defender. I was near  
forfeiting every thing; and I am the more  
zealous,



zealous, the more I have to repair. Adieu, Monsieur le Duc. I tell you again, you have deceived me.

## LETTER XLIX.

From the Duc de CLERMONT, to  
Mademoiselle HAMILTON.

**M**ADAM, it is of all men in the world, the most dissipated, and most frivolous in appearance, that now lays at your feet at once that levity, (which for a long time has constituted his pleasures) his pride, and his successes. The more my heart was independent, the more flattering it may be to fix it. Its vows, since they are addressed to you, are become purer. It seems that I have caught at your eyes a spark of your soul. Yet, angelic creature, you have wrought a miracle, which all our women together have vainly attempted : but they are revenged ; I at last feel a respectful flame ; and my heart  
is

is too much taken up, too much enslaved, in fine, too worthy of you, for desire a moment to profane the *immaculacy* of my devotion.

After this confession, which fear has long restrained, but at last escapes from passion, may I presume to demand of you, what are the motives of your retreat, and the exile you impose upon yourself? Heavens! in the flower of your age, what tyranny, or what caprice, can condemn you to live in solitude? Proud in your desert, of the secret flames you have lighted there, you confine us to our tumultuous vortex; and extinguish with your own hands the incense Love prepares for you. Say but the word, a brilliant career opens before you. If the Court has any charms for you, pleasures there attend you in crowds; and you will enjoy at once the adoration of the men, and the jealousy of the women. You will embellish every thing; and it is even possible that happiness may embellish you. How do you know? What pretensions

pretensions † are interdicted to beauty? Its flights have no limits.

If, however, you rather chuse to make Paris the place of your residence, all the hearts there will certainly be yours. Good God! what difference between you and those senseless flutterers, of which our circles are so impertinently proud! With their borrowed graces, their wit learned by rote, and their false understandings, how will such painted butterflies stand against natural bloom, true nobility, and all the gifts of nature?

The Count de St. Albin has, without doubt, spoken to you of me; he knows how well I love him; he knows all I have done for his happiness; and if you condescend to question him about me, I dare swear he will render me justice.

Judge of my love, since I sacrifice to you even my friend. I repent of nothing, however; but I am sure before-

† He insinuates, that she may hope to be taken notice of by the King, and become his mistress.

hand,

hand, if what I here venture to say, has the misfortune to displease you, you have good sense enough to keep it secret.

A mind like yours is above the petty satisfaction of vanity. In fine, Madam, if you reject my love, perhaps you will not refuse the tenders of my friendship. I have some fortune; condescend to dispose of it. All my resources are offered to you; and all are ennobled by the delicacy of my intentions.

I am, with the warmest adoration, &c.

## A B I L L E T

From Mademoiselle HAMILTON to the  
Duc de CLERMONT.

**I** HAVE just received the most audacious and impertinent letter that ever was written; which alone would have left me no room to doubt of the hand it came from, even though your signature had not appeared at the bottom of it. It is, indeed, hard to say whether the outrage

rage is greatest to my principles or my understanding : for you must surely think the woman an idiot, however abandoned, who could be deceived by such gross and awkward bombast! But how, Monsieur le Duc, could you presume to make me so injurious a proposal? Forms alone ought to have taught you better. I am an utter stranger to you ; your equal in rank ; and have, over and above, the prerogatives of my sex, which ought to be a bridle to yours. I pardon your letter, however, and your insults in favour of the disdain with which they inspire me ; and the pleasure I shall have in forgetting them. Do not fear of my boasting of a triumph, when I ought only to blush at your impudence. I shall conceal what is fit to be concealed ; and if I mention you to the Count de St. Albin, it shall be to assure him of your friendship, not to plume myself on your love.

L E T.



## LETTER L.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Marchioness de SYRCE.

WELL, Cruel! 'tis very well! I cannot but applaud your conduct, your obstinacy, your barbarity: This is the fourth letter I wrote you, to press your return to town. It will have the same effect the others have had, and yet you love! No; do not deceive yourself. They who love, act otherwise; they are not inflexible to the most pressing instances, and, above all, to the grief of the object that is dear to them.

Yesterday, the rendezvous of the King's hunt was in that part of the forest which joins the Marechal's *chateau*. All the world was there, except you. You probably guess'd, that the hopes of seeing you would bring me, and for that reason you affected to be absent. There is no extravagance to which a caprice might not incite

incite me. Imagine a madman mounted on an ungovernable horse. I wanted to be everywhere at once, and indiscreetly went to look into all the carriages. I made myself forty enemies by my air of ill-humour, by my vexation at not finding you, and my disdain marked for every one else.

At one side of the wood, I observed a coach with the Marechal's livery. I thought you might be in it. I rode up, and, in my hurry, almost thrust my head into the portal; but how great was my shock, when, instead of what love looked for, my eyes were met by the melancholy figure of your old Duchess. I thought I should have fallen from my horse. She seemed furious, agitated like the Sybil upon her tripod, murmured some inarticulate words, and would, no doubt, have strangled me, could she have got at me. I dare swear she is not yet recovered; and you must have found her, in the evening, at least twice as asthmatic as usual. But you see to what you expose me.

And pray, Madam, let me ask how were you employed in your delicious retreat, while all the rest of the universe was abroad? I really cannot tell what to make of you. Such tranquillity! Such indifference! You are then perfectly sure of my heart, it seems: or, What do I say? Perhaps you care not whether you keep it, or no. Yet, if you knew, if you knew the pain I suffer, and all my fears, I think you would strive to quiet them.

After the hunt was over, I wandered above four hours round that cursed *chateau*, which you will not be prevailed upon to quit. From the bottom of the avenue, I fix'd my eyes upon the great saloon, where I could distinguish company. I sought you. My looks, my soul, my imagination, my very being, were all busy in the search. Thus it is I love, Madam; and thus it is we ought to love. You don't know my heart. You seem to have no notion of the excess of which it is capable. Drive it not to extremities.

Once

Once more, I entreat you earnestly, humbly, deprive me no longer of the satisfaction of seeing you: that alone can keep me within bounds, and soften the torments of my situation, which I have not made you half acquainted with. Did you give me a taste of happiness only to snatch it from my lips? I am desperate; and there you leave me. Write to me no more. Your letters are no longer what I wish for. It is you, and you alone in person, that can content me. Don't resist my prayers—I threaten nothing; but——

## LETTER LI.

From the Duke de CLERMONT, to the Viscount de \*\*\*\*\*, travelling in Italy.

I AM out of humour with all the world; and I have hurried from Paris to come here, and recover myself. *Bezier's* has the prettiest situation of any town in France. The Governor of the province,

at whose house I am, is an amiable man. It is he that formed me. He weeps for joy when he thinks of the progress of his disciple ; and our re-union has something in it very tender.

But let us come back to the subject of my ill-humour ; for every one has more or less cause for a little. You may, perhaps, remember the admirable plan I communicated to you about six months ago in one of my letters, the most instructive I have ever written. My aim was to get one woman ; humble another ; and take, from a hair-brain'd young man, a mistress he was fond of, in order to make him attach himself to her, who, according to my decrees, he should be better pleased with. Well, my dear Viscount, nothing of all this has succeeded. I am confounded, discouraged ; almost miserable : such another defeat would make me forswear society. It was in vain to besiege the *Islander*. She repulsed every attack. Our little countrywoman, indeed, with the best grace imaginable, gave into all the snares we laid for her.



her. The Count was warm at first; and there every thing rested.

That silly Count! Would you believe it? as Madame de Syrcè grew weaker, he grew conscientious! Perhaps he has brought matters to a crisis; perhaps not. However, you know I always go by rule. I immediately noised the adventure, as if indubitable; and was the less circumspect in what I said, as I found my friends had the air of not trusting me with their secret. So there is virtuous *Madame la Marquese*, at once, upon the list of demi-reps. She has been had; and may be had by any one that will be at the trouble to ask her the question. It is the cry all over Paris. St. Albin, indeed, denies it strenuously; but the more he does so, the more I insist. He is the apostle of virtue; I the gallant historian. And which do you think is most likely to gain belief? The public laugh at his fables; every thing that I say passes for gospel.

Yet is it not inconceivable that a young man, well born, and tolerably educated,

should take it into his head to be delicate at his age, in the world that he sees, in the age that he lives, and in the way of good advice. St. Albin was fairly lanced. The conquest would have celebrated him for ever ; and he might as easily have sunk Madame de Syrcè, as I had formed the project. Every thing was disposed for success. He would have had all the honours of it ; and the rest of the women would have been obliged to him : but now, he is but a man like a hundred thousand others ; a silly fellow, incapable of seizing an occasion ; that has the scruples of a child, and does not know, that, by ruining one woman, he makes himself acceptable to all. I did all I could. I have nothing with which I can reproach myself. I never thought of being frustrated by a timid conscience, and the imbecilities of a little genius. However, I leave him between two women, and that's something ; though it is not the situation I wish'd.

I have already set l'Angloise agog, by means of some clandestine intelligence, which

which ought to have a good effect. And one of the furies, having the flambeau put in her hand, the other will not long be at quiet, when she finds, by the negligences inseparable from a double intrigue, that she is but a sharer where she thought herself whole and sole proprietor.

The poor Count ! I enjoy, a little too sensually, I confess it, his amorous misfortunes ; but does he not deserve them ? They say I am malicious : What do you think ? In short, my dear Viscount, they judge me wrongfully : but I dare open myself freely to you, who are capable of doing me justice. You, as a true man of the world, read me rightly. My interpreters are a pack of boobies ; neither capable of tasting or profiting of my instructions.

On my first entrance into society, I ran over its surface with a rapid eye. I saw, on one side, a group of melancholy pedants, insipidly honest, and contemptibly virtuous ; vegetate without titles, without recompence ; and placed up and down the several walks of life, like so many scare-

crows. Those sort of people are crows; put themselves in a passion with those that are good humoured: cry scandal; the temple of Virtue's on fire! and discompose the world without correcting it.

On the other hand, I distinguished those brilliant men who are thought superficial; who carry every thing by laughing at every thing; make a jest of the moralists that tire them; the women that adore them, and even of the minister that rewards them. They know that morality is not *a-la-mode*; and, therefore, they are not moral. They break all the ties that serve only to retard; dispense with the duties that pre-occupy; and slide to fortune on the smooth road of pleasure. I took the last for my models. Why plague one's self with cultivating a fruitless moral, while all the enjoyments of life are the result of useful frivolity? What have we to do in a monarchy? The government charges itself with all. The laws wake; the machine goes; the politicians take

take pains, and it is our wisdom to laugh at, while we enjoy the benefit of them.

The country you see has brought me to reflection. In fact, I had need of provincial tranquillity. The amusements of the capital were too much for me ; and, not to die altogether, I was obliged to desert. While I was employed in St. Albin's intrigue, I had upon my hands five or six of my own, which were a cruel exercise.

In the first place, *the Terville* fell upon me, under pretence that I appeared to her a man of sentiment. *Nota Bene.* That woman has the most inexorable constitution I ever had to deal with. However, I was not the dupe of her fantastic tricks. Her obedient nerves, her faintings, her passions,—and I soon set her down, with as little ceremony, as I had taken her up.

After her, came Madame de Sauci, an eternal coquette, who keeps up her credit by the society of old men of quality, and erecting herself into the oracle of young wives, who desire no better than to consult her, because they know she will give them



them the advice she followed herself formerly. She took by way of regimen. She was ordered me by my physician ; for which, if I ever forgive him. . . . While you live, Viscount, avoid violent remedies.

For Madame de Melleville, I don't much regret the eight or ten days I sacrificed to her. 'Tis a monkey, diverting enough in her way. She quarrels, is false ; sometimes witty, and always wicked. Particularly, I know not any one who puts more gaiety in a rupture. Every one must love that little devil.

But of all my affairs, none so well deserves a particular detail as the adventure I was engaged in with Madame Van Welden. 'Twas almost serious. Delicious creature ! Capricious, giddy, indecent, she has every thing capable of interesting. I never was acquainted with one whose conduct was so truly libertine ; whose manners were of a better composition. Her husband is a species of frenchify'd Dutchman ; a refugee burgomaster, who is garden-

garden-mad. This original has passion for plantations, and flowers; and his kind wife lets him follow his pleasures, without, however, partaking of them during the day time. After a rapid toilet, whip she is gone to the play, or the opera. She then returns to company at home, where there is hellish gaming, but a supper for the gods. Then comes a walk in the garden by torch light, and you may guess what havock is made among the carnations and ranunculuses. I confess this bewitching *hobgoblinzy* held me longer in the chains of my *crazy frow* than I approved of; besides, give her her senses, and she had nothing to recommend her.

After all these enterprizes, should I not be glad, think you, to see myself at length totally disengaged, and retired like another Cincinnatus? I dare swear you wish me joy of it. I lead here the most easy life imaginable. The governor keeps up the high stile; we talk over our exploits of all kinds; and, though I am out of my

C 6

appren-

apprenticeship, I still find instruction from his conversation.

He has given me learned notes and observations upon all the women under his jurisdiction. This, says he to me not long ago, can hold out very well for four days together; that will stand her ground for fifteen. Yonder is one that shall resist a month, or perhaps more; she is an example for the province. I had a mind to verify his intelligence, and I found it tally with the most exact veracity.

I prate like a true country gentleman. Adieu, my dear Viscount. Quit Italy, and come among us. I have positively too much business on my hands. I want a colleague who will not discredit me; and who can I chuse but you? I have a set of ideas entirely new for next winter; and in ceding to you one quarter of my affairs, believe me you will have a very respectable department.

L E T.

## LETTER LII.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN. to the  
Marchionefs de SYRCE.

**F**EAR my love, fear my despair ;  
fear the violence of them. I must  
die, or see you. There is nothing of  
which I am not capable. I will follow  
you to the extremities of the universe. I  
have a right in you : I claim it ; it is  
written at the bottom of your heart ; it  
will never quit mine ; and I know of none  
more sacred.

The Prince *de Soan* is gone to pass some  
time at the Mareſchal's. He told me  
himſelf, a few days ago, that he went  
merely becauſe he heard you were there.  
A very proper perſon he choſe to com-  
municate his ſentiments to, and make his  
confidante. He is in love with you ; his  
eyes, his diſcourſe, his agitation, all be-  
trayed it. He is in love with you, and yet  
you ſtay ; and yet you perſiſt to avoid me.

Once

Once again ; if you knew what I suffer, if you knew what I have to strive against, if you knew the nature of my troubles, and all the horror of my torments—but, no doubt, they give you no concern.

Does the Prince de Soan appear to you as amiable, as to me he appears happy ? Is he tender ? Does he walk with you under those charming shades ? I know not what I say—but tear yourself, I charge you, from the place where you are. Fly that man, who is odious to me, and ought to be the same to you. Fly him ; or I will not answer for the lengths to which my transports may carry me.

I have thought of more than one method to come to you, to trouble the peaceful moments you pass with my rival ; and make *you* the witness, and *him* perhaps the victim of my despair. There is no form, but love can take ; no obstacle, but he is able to surmount ; no resentment, but he is capable of feeling, where he is disdained. But whither does my rashness hurry me !

I am



But I am mad, and insult you ; my heart is too strong for my head, and gets the better of my reason ; I see, as it were, through a mist ; and all objects appear to me false.

My life, my love, I am all submission, all patience ; and my anger is but the flash of a moment, to throw me at your feet more devoted than before. I abjure every thing I have said. I confess myself guilty of a crime ; but punish it not with too much rigor. Yield to my intreaties, my prayers. Fear not the lover you have fascinated ; and afflict him no longer.

### L E T T E R LIII.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**W**ELL, yes, I stay here ; and you do not deceive yourself ; it is the Prince de Soan that determines me. Yes, *Monf. le Comte*, for the pleasure of seeing him every instant, I remain where I am ; and  
I know

I know not when I shall be able to prevail with myself to desert him. In a word, you guess every thing ; your penetration enchants me ; and I am infinitely indebted to it. But could you even suspect what you insinuate you believe ? Could you have so vile, so horrid an opinion of me ? But you retract, it seems ; you have it not ; and in every other respect, I ought to prefer the company of the Prince de Soan to yours.

He has not destroyed my peace of mind ; I can look at him without blushing. And why should I fly him ? I never feared ; I fear not now ; nor have I occasion to avoid but one mortal in the universe, the most amiable of all, was he not unjust, unreasonable, tyrannic ; and, if he affected not to doubt the power he abuses : but he has undone me, suspects me ; imagines injuries, affronts the innocent, and offends both himself and the woman that loves him. Yes, Monsieur le Comte, such is her destiny ; she loves you, even while you hold a poniard to her bosom.

Learn,

Learn, ungrateful as you are, learn all the secrets of a heart, which your inconsistency, your hatred, and even your contempt, will never be able to alter. Know, that the first moment I saw you, I was inclined to you by an irresistible impulse ; that the better I knew you, the more I loved you ; and that the avowal of your sentiments for me at once threw me into despair, and made me happy. Know, that love would have granted, at once, what honour would have always refused.

But how should you comprehend what her denials, her resistances, cost a woman, attached to duties which she trembles to violate ; while she reproaches herself with a passion she cannot vanquish ? How should you have an idea of the torment of adoring an object, and at the same time, condemning yourself to the insupportable punishment of seeing that object unhappy ? But thus it is, all my proceedings with you have been condemned either by my reason or my heart.

At

At length, oppressed by remorse, unable to bear your presence, your trouble, or my own constraint ; neither having the power to forget, or the strength to fly you ; I found myself a prey to the new torments of a jealousy, which I had no right to shew ; while every thing increased, and nothing soothed it ; nay, the secrecy with which it was hidden, irritated the anguish ; and assured my enemy of a victim, industrious to undo herself.

After this, dare you doubt me ? In spite of my weakness, dare you refuse me your esteem ? and if it be lost ; if I have forfeited my title, and deserve it no longer ; tell me, Cruel, tell me, what man can be dangerous for the woman who loves you ?

Indeed, Monsieur le Comte, you give way to most unjustifiable transports. Do not imagine, however, that I fear them. When I yielded, it was to your prayers ; and I am in no sort apprehensive of your fury. You will not come to this place, though I should not leave it ; nor will you attempt any thing that can expose me. I  
know

know you respect my desires ; and it is by my power over you, that I shall judge of your love. I have put my glory, as a deposit, in your hands ; and nothing will tempt you to betray my confidence. Besides, is it necessary to frighten me, to make me do what you please ?

I the witness ! and another the victim ! What other ? Would not your life be also in danger ? and should I not expire before your eyes, covered with infamy ? If I can, it is my duty, my interest, to keep from you. I say, if I can ; for I resolve nothing. But then, I promise nothing. I know not what I shall do. You say my absence afflicts you. Well : if it was not for the Prince de Soan, perhaps I might come to town to-morrow.

A CARD.



## A C A R D.

**T**HE Marchioness de Syrcè's compliments to the Comte de St. Albin; she is this moment arrived in town from the Marechal de Plombiere's, and brings a message from the Prince de Soan, which she can deliver to no one but the Count himself. She has left a great deal of good company: she does not know why; but if her friends in Paris should think they have had any influence in drawing her hither, it will be their duty to try if they can make her amends for those very agreeable friends she has deserted.

L E T.

## LETTER LIV.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**W**HAT is it a man beloved cannot accomplish? I have been near you but ten days, and I no longer know myself. My injuries are all wiped out; they have disappeared before me; and I am sensible to nothing but joy. You have got between me and dishonour; that dishonour, the view of which was so terrifying to my imagination; and love has the entire possession of me. I even think with pleasure of my past remorse; and am eager to tell you, I feel it no more.

Is not this a change! Yet it is not half what I have undergone. After our first fatal interview, when any one looked at me fixedly, I wished the ground would open to hide me from their regards. I have met you again; and I feel myself proud of what I was ashamed. I did not believe

believe it possible for love to assume such a form; but I am so taken up with applauding myself, that I have not time for astonishment. The morning, the evening, the day, the night, I think of you without ceasing. Your letters, especially those you have written to me since my return, are one of my chief employments. I kiss them a thousand times a day; and hardly open my eyes but to read them over and over again.

I was a coquet; I was seen everywhere but at home: but now it is there only I feel myself happy, while I am waiting for you. I hate the crowd; I hate flattery; I hate followers; in a word, I hate every thing I formerly affected, to confine myself to a single desire. I was content with my figure, thought myself agreeable; and I now wish to be a thousand times more so; for you have given my beauty a value in my eyes. I adorn myself to please you; and if formerly to fix the attention of the multitude appeared to me a triumph; I at present consider

it

it no otherwise, than as it gives me hopes of your approbation.

If I happen to be but ever so short a time in a company where you are not, I soon become absent; my senses, my heart, my soul, all bear me towards you. If your name is by chance pronounced, I feel I know not what emotion. This is the picture of my heart. Has it any analogy with yours? But go! be ungrateful if you can: it will kill me, without making me love you less.

I dare to tell you, (because you know I am not naturally vain,) that before I was acquainted with you, no one was more surrounded than I; not that I had any title to the vague preference your sex gave me over other women: I never thought so: it was a madness; and I was followed, because I was the fashion; and consequently nothing that was said to me went to my heart; I heard it as so many words of course; and with a hundred lovers, had not one. I saw much languishing, much affected despair; but I was  
calm,

calm, confident, full of security, and perhaps of pride. But when you appeared, all my trophies fell at once; my haughtiness was in an instant converted to trouble, diffidence, and fear. No more repose, no more coquetry; no more any thing but that tender love which is worth all, which stands in the place of all, which I prefer to all I have lost.

The world, no doubt, would give a terrible name to those professions; but, after all, what is the world? I love you; if you merit not such a distinction, no man ever did; and therefore I am justified. Nay, I will tell the world boldly my sentiments, and enjoy its reproaches. But you scold me in your last letter, for having expressed some fears about the duration of your attachment. Ah! my friend, I love too well, to be perfectly easy. Willing to believe you, I should, perhaps, assist you, had you a mind to deceive me; but even in believing, I should tremble. Talk not to me of self-confidence; nor think, that being accustomed to strike the crowd,



crowd, assures me against the dread of discontinuing to please him, who now stands in the place of it.

What is the project of which you spoke to me for to-morrow, and you feared I should not comply with? You doubt your own heart, if you doubt your own power over mine. I agree to it, be it what it will. Had I an inclination to be perverse, how could I oppose any thing to your desire?

## LETTER LV.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**T**HE woman that knew, and saluted us in that fatal walk, in that out-of-the-way solitude, where we thought ourselves secluded from all the world, what will she think? what will she say? The cruel public! it has no pity, and will never pardon a weakness, however it has been resisted, since it could not be vanquished:

it is inexorable ; and I am infatuated. Susceptible of remorse only, I am incapable of reflection. In the moment I am most faulty, in the moment I feel it with most bitterness. I would be more so, if you would have me.

How shockingly imprudent was I yesterday ! What forgetfulness of others ! of myself ! The most horrible misfortunes should attend it ; the loss of my life ought to expiate such a proof of my love : but let me rush into your arms, and there I shall find happiness. Ah ! how dangerous is it to love, when we love to such excess ! I feared for myself ; and that fear was a long time my security ; but I had no idea of what I experience. My soul is, as it were, intoxicated. Love makes an example of me. I braved him, I fled him ; and he takes his revenge.

I no longer see any thing. Yet, my dear friend, imagine not that I lament, or accuse myself. Alas ! of what ? You are culpable of my faults : inhuman ! they are yours. You make me love you too well.

Yet,

Yet, take pity of a woman, whose head is gone astray. Prevent her from being her own destruction. Make her do for you, what she will not do for herself. You have destroyed her reason : it is your duty to help her. I put myself in your care ; and implore your assistance, only to be more worthy of your regard.

P. S. The Countess did not sup at home last night ; and it was too late to go into the country. I supped at the Hotel de \* \* \* \*, with virtuous women. I sighed when I looked at them.—But love me still.

D 2

L E T.

## LETTER LVI.

From Madame SANCERRE, to her Daughter the Marchioness de SYRCE.

I HAVE been very angry with myself for not writing to you; but you know when I arrived here, I had ten thousand things to do; eternal accounts to settle, which I thought would never have an end. I found every thing in the best order. I begin to know myself again. My tenderness seizes the first moment of leisure; and I hasten to chat with you.

I could find in my heart to scold you for not coming along with me. What have people to do in Paris at this season? You, particularly, who are so dissipated all the winter, should in summer, methinks, have more need of country repose. The air we breathe here refreshes the blood, establishes the health, and gives strength to be mad again, with at least a

little

little less danger. Can you pardon me this expression? Your balls, your fittings up, your suppers, all those things alarm, and make me miserable. While I know you wake, I cannot sleep; but our watchings spring from very different causes; your's are occasioned by amusement; mine by inquietude. You have the prettiest eyes in the world, and they are sometimes sunk to a frightful degree. I don't love them when I see them so: nay, shall I tell you the truth? my eyes often tell me you are handsome, when my heart finds you ugly.

Our curate has asked after you. He has a mighty desire to convert you, and appears exceedingly vexed at your absence; but he pretends you must not escape; that he will save you, in spite of you, and make you confess your Paris pleasures are no pleasures. He will have some work upon his hands. Don't you think so? And the habitude that pleads for them, will be as powerful as the eloquence that pleads against them. He gave us the other day an excellent discourse upon the danger of



the passions, the evils they cause, and the fallaciousness of the happiness they promise. He really spoke very well; is a worthy man, animated with a true zeal. He takes as much pains in directing his village-consciences, as if he had under his cure the most illustrious sinners in France. Your Paris preachers speak but to shine; this never opens his mouth but to be useful. Your's are but orators; mine is an apostle.

But I must now tell you that Humbert, my farmer, has come to see me, and brought with him his daughter, the little *Nanette*, who you used to call your friend. She was very fine, and had no need of it. Imagine a figure, rather strongly built, but perfectly well made; eyes sparkling with the fire of health, cheeks like roses, and a pair of lips that might be envied any where. She has a sweetheart that would make a more luxurious picture of her; but I chuse rather to give her a portion than paint her. She has an air of discretion that much pleases me, and I am assured

her

her conduct does not contradict it. She is proposed as a model to all the girls of her age ; and, in her rural dress, she attracts the homage and respect of all that approach her. I am determined to marry her immediately to the young man she likes, who is the son of a labourer in the neighbourhood, of an excellent character. I propose to myself infinite pleasure from compleating this union. The marriage-ceremony shall be solemnized in my own chapel, and I will be at all the expence of the feast.

Such, my dear child, are the cares that employ me ; and such the innocent dissipations of the peaceable life I here lead. Your's are more noisy ; but, do they leave in the mind such soft impressions ? I have often told you how much I dislike that continual and fatiguing bustle in which you are carried round from chimera to chimera. In perspective, nothing so charming, as the world ; but, viewed nearer, it is an abyss, where every seduction marks a danger, and every pleasure a misfortune. There are

certain snares, indeed, which I have no fear of your falling into ; for if imagination should push you towards them, the sense of your own dignity would preserve you. With a giddy head, you have a good heart ; and should the one lead you astray, the other will always put you again in the right road. I know it, I believe it. I love to believe it ; and, if you should force me to think otherwise, I should die with grief.

But daughter, my dear daughter, appearances have often lost her whose heart was innocent. Coquetry is a poisoned bait which we are too easily seduced by. We think we seek at admiration, but we know not well what we would have ; and men's pride, and women's idolatry, make us pay too dear for it. There is boasting on one side ; calumny on the other. We complain of injustice ; we weep, we are angry ; what amused the fancy, begins to corrode the heart. Principle grows discouraged. By little and little, we begin to disregard what we have found insufficient

to

to defend us. At last Virtue herself gives way; and from being imprudent, we become guilty. Trust in my experience; it is the treasure of age, and I cherish it to be useful to you.

I married very young, and, consequently, entered the world betimes; where, thanks to your father, whom I shall ever regret, I always lived peaceably and happily. I had time to observe, to reflect upon, and to lament the women less happy than myself. I speak not of those who broke through the fences of modesty, perhaps the first excellence in a sex charged in some sort with the care of public manners; those abandoned wretches deserved their misfortunes; for the rigours of society are never to be complained of, when they revenge decency, punish the forgetfulness of duties, and maintain honour by the disgrace of those who desert it. I speak here of those weak, but warm characters, who blindly obey the impulses that are given them; that are seduced without being corrupted, and drawn

to the edge of the precipice, without being tumbled down it. Continually falling into little indiscretions, they avoid actual crimes: but such indiscretions must not be multiplied; and I confess it is those I fear for you.

My dear child, be not frightened at my morality; it has nothing in it severe. I am far from being one of those four pedants that decry pleasures my years forbid me to taste. Enjoy all your advantages. Your graces, your accomplishments belong to society; and I see them embellish it with a secret pride. Amuse yourself; but take care that your amusements are not hurtful to your felicity.

See few young men: they are presumptuous, and all without delicacy. Their manners are so little to your mind, that I require of you no very great sacrifice. Not that I think such company dangerous: I know they may be received without any ill consequence; but there is a respectable decorum in a certain reservedness of females. You cannot be too cautious:

your



your connections with your own sex are of the greatest importance: it is by those you will be judged. Take care to be sometimes soon with the women who give the *ton*, and who compensate by the grace of their understandings for what years have taken from their charms. In availing yourself of their consideration, and interesting them in your reception, you may allow yourself many liberties, which, without that political prevention, might do you a mischief. It is wise to provide against malignity; always attentive to catch at the little imprudencies inseparable from youth.

Under this safeguard too, you will give your pleasures a character of decency, which you ought never to loose sight of. Avoid being confounded with the crowd of decry'd creatures, whom dissipation connects, rivalling puts asunder, that adore to-day, detest one another to-morrow, and, are giving the public continual scenes to excite either laughter or contempt. Rather chuse your acquaintance among younger women, that are yet led by the

instinct of natural goodness, than among those hardened coquets, rendered furious by the decline of their beauty, the diminution of their admirers, and the prospect of being totally forsaken.

Women of this stamp, necessarily abhor all those whose natural bloom insults their daub'd mask ; and puts the men, the least clear-sighted, in the way of making comparisons to their disadvantage. They cannot bear the mortifying prospect of rising charms, and artless graces ; they fall out with time ; having lost their votaries, look about for victims, and, being objects of love no longer, become objects of fear. Avoid them then, if you would not be exposed to calumny and slanders of all kinds. Nothing is more to be dreaded than found pretensions where rights are wanting.

I am sensible of Mons. de Syrcé's faults ; and never think of them but with concern for you, and anger against him. He is blamed by all the world. Take care not to render him excusable. Let your husband blush for his own conduct, and applaud

plaud yours. There seldom fails to come a time, when legitimate engagements recover their force; and all interests uniting the couple the most alienated, return to each other's embraces. Then, how will you enjoy your sacrifices! how will you feel the satisfaction of never having broken your vows! How different will be your sensations from the woman's, who having forgot her obligations, has degraded her dignity, put herself in the power of a man who is happy; but, through her shame, and having forfeited all right to the esteem of others, has ceased to value herself!

My God! what are all the vain adorations of a few dissipated libertines? who only consider you as the mere objects of their pleasure; and whom pleasure never fails to carry elsewhere when it presents itself. What can hold them? is it their promises? they make a jest of them. Is it your tears? they triumph in them; and the unfortunate creature they hasten to destruction. Soon eclipses in their eyes the weeping wretch they have already destroyed.

stroyed. But methinks I feel myself grow angry unawares; and how I have launched so far into this ugly subject, I know not; which, once more I tell you, does not concern you.

Give me news of your dear little ones; if their father neglects you, they are not culpable; love the innocent creatures, and inspire them with early notions of virtue. Make their education your own employment; it is a duty in which you will find a thousand sweets. I would recall you, my dear daughter, to those touching and primitive functions, which the lazy delicacy of our modern fine ladies abandon. The lessons of a mother are persuasive; it is the heart that gives them. Without doubt you will have need of the assistance of those whom study has familiarized with the parts of knowledge which our sex is denied. Masters must be sought to form their understandings; but the cultivation of their hearts should be a work entirely your own.

P. S. Adieu. Read my letter with a

little

little attention; remember that it comes from your tenderest friend. Nothing can inspire me but a wish to see you as happy as you deserve.

## LETTER LVII.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE to her Friend Madame BREVAL.

**YOU** know my weakness; you know my sorrow, you know my repentance; in fine, you know my love, stronger than them all. You have been witness to the weight that hung upon my soul, the passion that distracted it, the terrors that filled it, and my fatal resolve to adore the man that has undone me to my latest breath; for whom I would yet willingly lose more, was that possible. Well, it is in the midst of these alarms, of these fears, of my self-reproaches, and all the horrors of my situation, that I have received a letter from my mother, which fills the measure of my distress.

I be-



I believe she suspects nothing; she seems to be yet in the dark; but was she instructed of all, I should be less miserable. It is her security that kill me; that drowns me in tears; and joins to the remorse of my fault, the meanness of usurping an opinion, of which I am not worthy. Alas! that kind friend, that respectable mother, is far from thinking that I have stifled all the principles she sets before me; that I resemble the very women she despises! She knows not that I am already fallen into the pit, from which she endeavours to save me; that her counsels came too late; that I have defied them beforehand. Every commendation she gives me, plunges a poniard in my heart; and the most tender letter that ever was written, is for me the most insupportable of punishments!

Oh! my friend, it is a dreadful thing to know ones self culpable, and at the same time receive the praises which are only due to virtue! It is a reflection I cannot bear; and yet I am not sorry that it pains me; for I flatter myself it is the  
feeling

feeling of an honest mind. Am I then, am I yet honest?

But is it not hard that women should be born to wage continual war, to live in a state of lasting self-denial? Should the weakest creature be that which is expected to give examples of the greatest strength? When our hearts are insulted, have they no right to repose themselves with some object that will console them? Are we, then, but the sport of society, and the victims of nature?

Perhaps I may be self-interested in my opinion; but I would fain flatter myself, that there can be no shame where there is sentiment; that strong passions have their excuse in their violence; and, that the pride of loving a meritorious man, makes full amends for the infidelity we commit against one that has proved himself unworthy. If the Count de St. Albin is sincere, then I have nothing with which I can reproach myself; it is his ingratitude alone can make me repent my confidence, and his inconstancy alone that can render me

me vile. This is most certain, that I love him more than ever. At this moment, while I write to you, his picture is on one side of me, and my mother's letter on the other. I weep over the letter ; but the picture I embrace a thousand, thousand times, and press it to my bosom.

But I must hasten to have done ; though I scarce know how, when I am chattering with you. I feel myself greatly comforted in having thus unburthened my breast to you. I thought at first, Madame de Sancerre's letter would made a stronger impression on me ; and, at least, altered my disposition to the Count so far, as to have made me determine to see him no more ; but I find it is no such thing : and so you may perceive how the counsels of my best friends are likely to be heard. Yet I should be sorry to see my mother ; for I know I should not be able to support her tendernefs ; and betray myself. But you will say, Why affect her ? and that's true ; so kind, so affectionate a mother ; so tender  
a friend !

a friend! Would I could be otherwise than unworthy of her!

P. S. I shall expect you this evening. The Count goes to Versailles; and without you, I shall be alone in the universe.

## LETTER LVIII.

From Mademoiselle HAMILTON to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

SOMEbody has sent me an anonymous letter; but it has neither turned my brain, nor taken from me the strength to write to you. Another woman, they say, engages you, and that you have abandoned me. I will not believe it. Anonymous friends are often secret enemies. It is a snare spread for my love. In fine, my heart is not convinced; and therefore the falsehood is manifest.

I cannot, however, help having observed, that for some months past you have been neglectful and constrained in your behaviour towards me; that your letters  
have

have wanted that touching simplicity, the mark of a heart interested in what it dictates; and that you have been absent longer, and oftener, than usual. But fly odious suspicions: I abjure them for ever! If Heaven, the persecutor of my infancy, if Heaven itself had decreed that you should be, one day or other, inconstant, I defy even Heaven to render you false; you would tell me my misfortune; you would sooner be cruel than perfidious; and I should thank you for it. It is better to perish by a stroke of thunder than a slow poison. Once wounded to death, I desire to be out of my pains. In receiving my information from yourself, I shall, at least, have one consolation; I shall be the victim of sincerity, which is a virtue. I shall still find somewhat to praise you for; and, having not what we love, is it not a happiness to die?

I once thought you valued me above all things, because you told me so; and till you tell me the contrary, I shall always rely upon that protestation. But, at the  
same



same time, I am prepared for a reverse. If it exists, open your heart to me; read my sentence. Let me repeat it, I call for death, and the truth. No involuntary caresses, no deceitful kindnesses; any thing rather than an expression your soul does not feel. Fear not on my part; the little passions of vulgar minds, the clamorous lamentations, the vain reproaches, with which weakness pursues ingratitude. Acquainted with misfortunes from my cradle, I am exercised in it; and having felt with energy the charms of being loved, I can support with courage the horror of being so no longer.

No doubt this letter betrays some trouble of mind: come, and put an end to it. A word, a look will be sufficient, either to restore me to my former happiness, or set bounds to my anguish; where doubt is torture, certitude is a kind of ease.

I shall not pretend to say any thing in your favour, or what I deserve; for what are deserts to captivate love, which should know no obligations? Once it is influ-  
enced

enced by them, its nature is changed, and we must call it by some other name. Force yourself, persuade yourself, then, to nothing. I will receive your love as a gift, not as a gratuity, a debt, or a charity. If you find pleasure in bestowing it no longer, only refuse it with generosity.

## LETTER LIX.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Chevalier de GERAC.

**M**Y dear Chevalier, never was man more sorry for having rejected the advice of a friend, than I am; nor ever had man more reason to be so. When I abandoned myself to the fatal ascendant you opposed, I was far from foreseeing the torments of my present situation. In pursuing Madame de Syrcè, I have gained the most lovely woman in the world, the most heavenly; but there is my misfortune: I was misled in my opinion of her; appearances deceived me. She is nothing  
of

of what I imagined: and I have injured—but was I to describe to you what I suffer, I am sure you would forget what I deserve!

She has given me her heart. I gained it when I thought I was only practising upon her passions: but who, under all the appearance of levity, could expect to find the most tender and delicate mind, the most penetrating wit, the warmest imagination, and the noblest sentiments? I wish she would renounce me. I vex her, I contradict her, I neglect her; I often hide from her the violence of my passion, in order to moderate her's; yet, was she to love me less, I believe I should go distracted. Thus, while I am filled with remorse, my heart resolves to remain culpable; and I strive to alienate, while I fear to lose her.

I was with her yesterday. I found her sad; and surprised her two or three times with her eyes fixed upon me full of languor and melancholy. I endeavoured to raise her spirits; but my gaiety was false,

false, and she could not catch it. All I could do, was to force from her one of those vague and involuntary smiles, which sometimes escapes even from pain itself; but that did not impose upon me.

Conceive my concern, my agitation, my embarrassment. But a few hours before, I had received a letter from Hamilton, in which she accuses me, (but in a manner that has roused my conscience, and set all her merit singularly before me) of having attached myself to another woman, and renounced her. There is something so uncommonly noble in the stile of her letter, that I send it to you inclosed. So you will see I undo two women, equally beautiful, interesting, and estimable. I am linked to the one by oaths, and all the principles of probity and honour: the other attracts me, flatters me, charms me by her graces, her virtues, which I had no idea of; in fine, by the inconceivable contrast of what she is, with what she seemed to be. She thinks me free from

attach-

attachments, and abandons herself to me in a manner inconceivable.

I know not what to do ; I propose an hundred things, and follow nothing ; and all this is owing to the counsels of a man I thought my friend. I was no libertine, nor likely to become such. I was happy in rendering happy the kind, amiable, and worthy creature I had chosen. I should never have remarked, but for him, the dangerous object that has destroyed that felicity ; the object which I now adore, prefer to all ; who has sacrificed to me her duty, her reputation, the quiet and sweets of her life ; whom I injure in the strongest sense of the word, and for whom, at the same time, I would willingly perish.

But the anonymous letter sent to *Antueil*, from whom could that come ? could it be from the Duc de Clermont ? Why not ? I am assured, by a person in whom she puts confidence, that it is not long since he made Hamilton proposals of the most traitorous nature ; and I know he took pains even to send emissaries to the



house of the Marchioness, in order to deceive her about me, while he was persuading me that she was my mortal enemy. In a word, his character is such as you have formerly drawn it. He is a monster, and I owe him nothing. I even detest the services he has done me. I am even glad to find myself ungrateful. But how ungrateful? is it possible that a man like the Duc de Clermont can confer an obligation?

Write to me ; give me your advice. There may be situations more pitied than mine ; but few can be more painful. How I envy your happy tranquillity ! such is the effects of prudence. Would I had been prudent !

P. S. You talked the other day of going to the regiment : did you design to leave town soon ? Stay where you are, I beseech you ; I take the matter on myself : the regiment may do without you ; but I cannot do without a friend.

L E T.

## LETTER LX.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**A**RE you then determined to throw me into despair? and will you never keep to what you promise me? Must I renounce all? Would you have my life? Take it, it is yours; but if you have not a mind I should die a thousand times over, less severity and more indulgence.

Can you grant me nothing? Have I merited nothing? Are you like those who, while they are in expectation, promise more than is asked; but, once gratified, refuse even to acknowledge the favour they have received? You treat me with ill-nature; and yet, fly out upon the least reproach. Alas! even my injustice should meet with some grains of allowance from you. Besides, is being ill-natured the way to correct me? When we have done wrong, we are sorry for it; we make ex-

cuses, which, indeed, prove little ; but a word is sufficient when it is tender, and comes from the heart.

Do you think you were in a sufficient spirit of contradiction yesterday evening ? Your conversation displeased me exceedingly. Reason, you maintained, was the base of all the virtues. Reason ! What a moral ! it freezes me. I would have my friends humane, liberal, just, indulgent, ingenuous, without a shadow of reason. I would have the love of virtue the sole motive to induce us to the practice of it, without the help of calculations or reflections. I would have people judge, act, pardon, oblige, through inclination, not principle ; and I would reject the gifts of the cold benefactor, who served me merely because he ought. When you can feel my sorrows, I shall think you worthy to relieve them. Ah ! my friend, believe me, if the Divinity was to descend among mortals, it is in the shape of sensibility he would deign to reveal himself.

Those

Those privileged beings who know nothing but their natural enthusiasm, are, in my eyes, a thousand times more worthy than the methodical reasoners, who are virtuous through shame, through fear, through pride, or by system. The one is a sterile ground, which produces nothing but by the force of culture; the other a land, which human care has never wrought, but, good in itself, will continue to the last. The man of probity, doing good by instinct, only astonished at people's admiring it; who is, without witnesses of his actions, without hope of recompence, without study, without ostentation, philosophers of all ages! There is my hero. Nature presents you with virtue itself; reason can, at most, but give you its image.

This is my way of thinking; and I am very glad of having expanded my heart at the expence of your wit. But *a propos!* I thought you a little absent yesterday, with all your fine discourse. What ailed you? Venture to tell me; for I am afraid

to ask. Forgive my moral dissertation, and come to me early. Adieu. Love your mistress, your friend ; who lives but for you.

## LETTER LXI.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**I**T shall be so then ; I had nothing to complain of ; or, if the injury was too severely felt not to be real, I pardon it. Will that satisfy you ? When you came yesterday, I was in the most profound heaviness ; but you soon put an end to my grief ; an inconceivable charm spread a brightness round me ; and my soul, in flying towards you, grew less sad, as it became more agitated. Ah ! if true sentiment speaks to you in my favour, if a love the most tender has any right to you, spare me pains which I cannot support ! The least negligence will kill me.

How



How far are you from resembling me ! Consider, Cruel, consider, that all has disappeared to my eyes ; there is for me in nature but the man I love ; and I should cease to count myself for something, was I little to him. Manage my sensibility then, and fear to lacerate a bosom, where every thing is your own. My head (notwithstanding what you say in one of your letters) is not the source of my inquietudes ; they come from my heart. My imagination may sometimes draw me into dangerous indiscretions ; but when I grieve, 'tis in the very fountain of life.

Alone at present, retired in my apartment, far from others, near you, I know not whether my pangs (which I am far from having told you in their extent) I know not, I say, whether my secret sufferings augment not my love. May they be prejudicial only to myself ! Immortal and supreme Disposer of all things, pardon the distractions of a lost woman, who offends you against her will ; who reveres your goodness, and stands in need of it ;

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who

who adores you in one of your most perfect works! Oh Heavens! if my passion be a crime, leave me in my uneasiness, leave me in my doubts; compleat not my perdition, by opening my eyes!

Dearest friend, since love makes not the happiness of life, where can we hope to find it? I am horribly dejected. I tire you; but what will you have? I am naturally sincere; I pour out my soul; I pour it into yours; and that comforts me. Why can I not follow my heart? Why are we not always with those we love? Do you feel, like me, the torment of constraint, the wearisomeness of absence? the impatience of return? that emotion which happiness changes into transport, and the languishment, yet more delightful, that succeeds? Go, then; vex me if you will; I shall find a pleasure in dying of my vexation. But you are too good, too generous, too tender, and too honest, to deceive.

Deceive! how have I mentioned that odious word? Could you adopt the barbarous

barous system of those men who are not worthy to approach you ; of those despicable men, who, insensible to love as to morality . . . . but let me not proceed ; you know who I would paint. And, after all, what do the wretches enjoy ? Those soft impressions, so precious to sensible hearts, the voluptuous union of two tender minds, that are all in all to each other, the inexplicable charm which possesses them ? No, of all this they are ignorant ; they carry everywhere indifferently their frozen vows ; and neither feel the degradation of their being, nor the evil that results from their scandalous pleasures.

Leave, leave, my friend, such contracted souls to their sickness of themselves ; and never stain the dignity of yours. Women are a portion of society, which baseness and pride at once make a glory of abusing. View from on high that inhuman custom, and take care never to descend to it.

## LETTER LXII.

From the Chevalier de GERAC to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

AS soon as I found my counsels useless, I held my tongue; for what could I have said to you? Will the passions hear? I suffered much in contemplating the anguish you were preparing for yourself. I even foresaw, when you were far from having any idea of it: but courage should never forsake us; and this is the time to use yours.

You have been weak; and you suffer for it. Let the energy of your mind return with your reason. You are susceptible of heroism, whatever the world may think. There is more ways than one of being a hero. Conquer yourself. This occasion calls upon you to collect your force; and the idea of a generous action ought to be seized as soon as it is perceived. I know what it will cost you; but what is the

the sacrifice that does us no violence? and perhaps there are not any pains which the esteem of ourselves does not recompence.

You are engaged to the lady at Antueil by a solemn promise; that promise was free, nobody compelled you to it; and though, perhaps, indiscreet, it is not less inviolable. I will even go farther; the more secret it was, the more sacred you ought to hold it, (as I have told you once before;) and Mademoiselle Hamilton having no claim but such as you judge proper to allow, the more you ought to respect her titles. In invalidating them, prejudice set aside, it is yourself you dishonour, and not her. Instead, then, of breaking a union, which you were industrious to form, draw it yet closer: this is the moment. Save yourself in the arms of your first attachment.

I judge you, as I judge myself; and were all men together of a contrary opinion, convinced of the rectitude of mine, I would not retract it. But you will say,



you must, then, forsake Madame de Syrcè ! Forsake who? a married woman ! with whom your connection was unthinkingly begun, and cannot be continued without ending in her eminent dishonour : for observe, it is upon the infraction of all her duties, you found your happiness with Madame de Syrcè ; in forsaking her, then, you shew her the most perfect mark of your regard. Besides, are either of you happy ? Do not all your pleasures come to you poisoned with apprehension and remorse ? Is not your very letter, the description you gave me of her and yourself, a proof of it ?

If, however, through an unaccountable infatuation, you should be so strongly wedded to those bitter sweets as not to be able to relinquish them ; if your passion for your former mistress is so totally ravished from your heart, as to be past recall ; I think you, at least, owe her the satisfaction she demands in her letter, (a letter which you very justly style noble, and I have read with the highest admiration.) I think

think you ought not to suffer her to deceive herself; but, as she continues her connection with you, in the supposition that you continue to love her, you ought to declare frankly how matters are, and that you continue to love her no longer. The manner in which you met, the footing you are upon, require you to treat her with distinction. As for the other lady, if she is the character you describe, and I am willing to believe, she cannot but approve a generous conduct by a woman who is like herself unfortunate, and not so much to blame.

I know there are a certain sort of people, who would exclaim upon this occasion with a degree of contempt, and cry, "What a fuss is here about an intrigue! let it end as it began. Of what mighty consequence is an affair with a woman, that it requires so much advice, so much management?" but if those people would but consider for a moment, they would find, that this trifling affair is to a woman a matter of the greatest consequence

quence in the world ; and nothing but a want of humanity, and a disregard of all the moral virtues, can make us think it trifling after such a reflection.

To conclude, my dear Colonel, I am more and more convinced, from every step I take in life, that true felicity is inseparable from morality. In endeavouring to draw our pleasures from any other source, they come false and unquiet ; and I compare them to those torrents which rush down rocks, and lose themselves directly in marshes and quagmires. It is only in opening our hearts to the charms of a legitimate love, in giving ourselves intirely to an object, who is free to accept the donation, that we can taste that sweetest of passions in its perfection. Fix our happiness, and we always know where to find it.

I by no means approve your resentment against the Duke. Is such a man worth your anger ? If he was but a fool, perhaps we ought to pity him ; but he is at once silly and mischievous : contempt,  
then,

then, is what he deserves ; and contempt is always calm. It is the vengeance of superiority. The arms of hatred are within reach of all the world ; but why hate, when we can revenge ourselves better, and suffer less ? You rate the Duke at his just value, and he is punished. I found nothing for you but his mask ; that is fallen off, and the wretch is defenceless.

Adieu. May the voice of friendship reach your heart, and waken there all the sentiments worthy of its owner !

**A BILLET**

## A B I L L E T

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Chevalier de GERAC.

I HAD a mind to follow your advice, and write to Hamilton; but could not at last have resolution to do it. My hands trembled; tears filled my eyes, and I let fall the pen. I know not what's the matter with me. I am a real object of pity. The more I adore Madame de Syrcè, the more I am angry with myself; and she is far from suspecting the motive of my ill-humour. I write to her no more; I will write to her no more; and I will endeavour to see her seldomer. I feel the justice of every thing you say in your letter. My reason approves, though my passions condemn. I know not which will prove the strongest; but I am determined to put them to the test.

L E T.



## LETTER LXIII.

From the Marchionefs de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**I** ALWAYS have occasion to write to you. Why are not you under the same necessity with regard to me? Whence comes it? Happiness lies in the excess of sentiment. A reasonable lover is but a friend. I adore you; and yet would fly you to the end of the world, if I thought you had but a prudent attachment to me.

Forgive me, if, in our conversation yesterday, my vexation got loose. I had chained it up for several days. You appeared cold to me, and I was on the rack. Pity me, if nature has given me a too feeling heart. Be no more offended at my fears. Ought their motive to displease you? Will you have it a crime in me to love you beyond my force? Condescend to be gentler, and encourage your mistress with more tenderness. You have nothing  
to

to reproach her with, but that she alarms herself too easily.

Imagine me not unreasonable. I seek no empire over you, but that of affection. In my own passion, I make no calculations; but blindly obey the spontaneous dictates of my heart. Perhaps I should please you more, if I had put more *firessse* in my conduct. You are acquainted with all my faults: I have not hid one of them from you. Never will pride either stop my tears, or make them flow. I should support with courage, with haughtiness, with insolence perhaps, a change of fortune; but the pains of the heart get the better of me.

What then is that magic which you say you would invent, if you were forced to renounce me? Is there another magic but love? And do you think I could live a moment without yours? This expression in your letter has made me melancholy. Write to me that you love me; that you will love me always; and write to me so without ceasing.

My

My dear friend, your letters in your absence are your representatives. I put them on my heart. I sometimes scold, and always adore them. Those that are frigid make me sigh; but not regret what I have done for you. Even when you afflict me, it is myself I accuse, who have not the way sufficiently to please. Good God! why cannot I give you more? Why cannot I give you every day new proofs of what every day I feel stronger and stronger?

But to return to my complaints, or rather my prayers. Spare me, I beseech you, those inquietudes which make me weep in the night, and out of temper in the morning when I wake. Some of your answers to my letters are so dry! well then, I put them towards the fire, and am frightened out of my wits lest the flame should catch them; and then I kiss them, and read them over again, and lock them up as carefully as if they were worth the pain.

I am a fool. Am I not? We are all so when we love. Don't forget we are to  
sup

sup together. I hate the world without you, and am never well but where you are. There then is an end of the chimeras of imagination. I have no more vague desires. I am no longer at a loss to know what I would possess. You have fixed all.

## LETTER LXIV.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**I** HATE love, and the day it entered my heart; and myself more than all. Why, when you strove to please me, did you not shew yourself to me such as you really are? I should at present have less to reproach you with: It was to your sentiment alone I thought I yielded; and if you had given me arms against you, I should have found strength against myself. . You, who I have made my god! but my heart has deceived me; I renounce you: I ought not, I will not love you any longer. I will, if it be possible, forget you.

Ah!

Ah ! rather unfortunate by your means, (and more unfortunate than you will believe) let me have the only pleasure now left me ; the pleasure of weeping in your arms the loss of my quiet ; but never your absence. What would become of me far from you ? You don't know me ; if you did, you would treat me with more humanity ; and not suffer three days to pass without our meeting. You would not sup with Madame de Thèmines ; and, above all, make a mystery of it to me.

What a letter is this I write you ! But why should I hide from you what I feel ? Better be accused of injustice than falsehood. Read it ; answer it. Tell me I am wrong, and endeavour to persuade me that I am so. My happiness depends upon that opinion. Prove to me ; prove to me that I deceive myself. One of us is to blame. My heart tells me it is not I ; and, since I weep, it must be you.

LET-



## LETTER LXV.

From Madame de SYRCE to the Count de  
St. ALBIN,

**I** CAME home, and did not find you. Your name even was not writ upon my list. I am half dead, and I wish I was wholly. For you, be happy ; be always so. You, for whom I would a thousand times give my life. It will not now be long. What should I do with it ? The man I love neglects me. My approaching end is the only salve of my pains. They cannot be augmented ; but I pardon you. May you never feel the like.

Come to-morrow for the last time. Bring with you my picture, my letters ; or rather keep them. You may sometimes be tempted to look over the expressions of my tenderness, which will recall me to your memory, and you will not hate my image. I attempt not to reproach you : I have no right. Why should my inclination

tion tie you? You were attached to me only by your own; and, if it is instinct, it is just that you should no longer consider me as any thing. The faith of lovers is voluntary: every one knows the oaths of love have no force; to build upon them then would be folly; they are sacred only while the obligation is felt; and the madman that promises, and the wretch that believes, equally abuse each other.

I can no longer doubt of it: some one else engages you; some other happier woman takes you from me. Oh Heavens! and at what time! But it is enough. Without comfort from you, without hope in myself, my soul is prepared for the worst that can happen. I have but one thing to beg, that you will confirm to me, by a few lines, what your conduct gives me so much reason to apprehend;—whether a change so sudden springs from my fault or yours. I only complain of fate, and exact nothing of you but sincerity. Fear not to give me pain; fear only to deceive me and yourself. Consult your heart, and  
then

then tell me all without disguise : hide not from me the least circumstance. It is in my sensibility alone consists my penetration, and nothing possible escapes my imagination.

It is possible that the impatience to obtain what you wished for, in preventing you too much in my favour, lent me charms in your eyes, which my weakness has since robbed me of : your heart, or your imagination, shut at that time, whether to my imperfections, or the graces of others, may since have opened without your consent. Your politeness, your judgement perhaps, may still incline you to think well of me ; but I am undone, if you are obliged to have recourse to either. In short, how can I tell but you may have regrets ? But rather let me lose you for ever, than pain you a moment. Yes, I forego, I release you. Yet, let me repeat, if after all I have done, if after all I have suffered, you must still abandon me, (for I shall be willing to think it a fatality) sometimes, at least, remember the marks

of

of the most tender passion, the melancholy consequences of which . . . .

But I go too far . . . . Farewell ! . . . .  
To-morrow I will bid you farewell eternally . . . . They tell me I have got a fever : so much the better.

## LETTER LXVI.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to her  
Friend Madame BREVAL.

**O**PEN to me the arms of friendship ;  
let me hide my tears in your bosom.  
I dare not turn my eyes upon myself. I  
fear even to see the light ; and blush beforehand at the dreadful secret I propose to communicate to you. Alas ! my friend, in vain I abused my own credulity, in vain I distracted myself upon the motive of my doubts. They are at last replaced by a frightful truth, which I dreaded more than death. Where shall I fly ? who will receive me ? Methinks my crime is published everywhere. Unfortunate wretch !

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My

My sighs choak me : I am drowned in tears : I scarce see what I write. You understand me ; you know what I would say. Your unhappy friend is lost.

I am—oh Heavens ! how shall I express my misfortune ? Duty, fame, repose, decency ; I have braved all, sacrificed all, forgot all. And I love without return ! The man that has undone, disdains to regard, disdains to comfort me. He abandons me, betrays me no doubt ; nay, perhaps hates me : and at the instant of his falsehood, his indifference, his cruelty, I carry about the shameful pledge of my credulity, his artifice, and our mutual crime. At length you know it ; and there, my friend, is the cause of that profound sadness, of which you have for some time sought the reason.

What will become of me ? Even you yourself must regret me now. You can pretend to see me no more ; and I shall be the outcast of society. How, then, shall I sustain the reproaches of an injured husband ? the tears of an unhappy and be-  
loved



loved mother? My head turns; a mist gathers round me; all appears a horrid chaos; I see nothing distinctly but dishonour.

However, I submit to it; for Heaven forbid that, vile as I am, I should endeavour to escape, by overturning all the laws of nature! No; rather let me be an object of contempt for an unjust world, than of horror to myself. What is shame, when put in the balance against a crime? I embrace the one, to save me from the other; and perhaps, in this instance, infamy is honourable. Yet, would you believe it? On finding my situation, my first thoughts were—Oh! Author of all mercy, look down upon, pity, and forgive me.

I will tell you more. Had not, for two years past, the irregular conduct of Monsieur de Syrcè obliged me to break all degree of intimacy with him, I would not have the baseness to cover my fault at the expence of our children. I would not give their name to the creature which will shortly depose against me; and expose my

weakness, without rendering me more criminal. Unfortunate being! branded with infamy from your first entrance into the world, and condemned to it even in the womb of your mother! that wretched mother will still do her duty by you; she will at least render you to life; the only benefit you have to expect from her.

It is resolved then: I put myself into the hands of Providence; and will support, with courage, the afflictions he shall please to load me with. Nothing terrifies me but the consciousness of deserving his wrath. For, oh! my friend, you know not how far my frenzy goes. Amidst all my misfortunes, I forgive the fatal cause of them. His excuse is in my heart, on my lips; I abhor myself, without reproaching him. Nay, amidst all my griefs, methinks the first is his inconstancy. Yes, it is that I cannot suffer; it is that; the bare thought of which freezes my blood, and sinks my heart within me. The barbarian! What an instant has he made choice of to leave me to myself! Yet  
let

let me not force you to judge him with too much rigour. He knows not my situation; and that renders him less culpable. He shall never know it, if I can help it; I will have none of his commiserations. I renounce beforehand all the cares that humanity can offer me; for which I would not even return thanks to love. But what is it, more than all the rest, that engages me to this painful part? Is it not the satisfaction to have yet some appearance to excuse my undoer? Yes; and I will believe, if he was acquainted with the condition I am in, breaking through all the allurements he may have elsewhere, he would fly to assist, to comfort me.

Here is company whom I cannot refuse to see; and I shall be obliged to shew a serene countenance, while death is in my soul. I cannot finish my letter, as I desired. My faithful Sophy takes it to you. Poor creature! she loves me tenderly; and her affection adds to my grief. I tremble every time she looks at me. I

F 3

have

have not dared to tell her my secret ; and there is another consolation, of which I deprive myself : but what consolation should there be for me ! . . . . . Heaven is just . . . . .

## A B I L L E T

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to her Friend Madame BREVAL.

**A**H! what have I read? my very soul is moved. My friend, my tender friend, your letter is a cordial. It is steeped in your tears; I have covered it with mine: All hearts, then, are not shut against me; and a ray of joy even still penetrates the melancholy that ever shadows me. I will come and see you; I will come this evening. You will have pity on me; and, in spite of all the horror of my fate, I shall find ease in your embraces. How I thank! how I love you!

L E T.

## LETTER LXVII.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Marchioness de SYRCE.

**Y**OU tell me you have a fever : would I could take it from you. Let it seize me ; it is I, and I alone, it ought to consume. Your agitation, your trouble, has thrown you into it ; and that is all owing to me. Yet do not suppose that I am well. The days that I have passed without seeing you, have been days of torture. Sleep has been a stranger to my eyes almost ever since : but, alas ! the more I love you, the more I am blameable.

For Heaven's sake, no interrogations upon what I write to you ; you shall know all ; but the time is not yet come. Only of this be satisfied ; I love, I can love nobody but you. I tell it, I swear it to you, by all that is just and true, by that honour which is yet sacred to me. God forbid



I should be capable of change. No; was I forced to chuse between death or another love, I would not exist till to-morrow. My joy, my blessing, my fate! I renounce every thing but you.

You must pardon the distraction of my style; it comes from my heart. But the greatest of my miseries is, to be loaded with your reproaches, and not to be able to question your justice. Tell me, then, is this love? are these the abominable effects, which the choicest gift of the Divinity produces? Violence and remorse on one side; grief and despair on the other! Yet, have I not been barbarous, to cost her I love a tear? Perish the world before she sheds another!

I fly to throw myself at your feet, to ask your pardon; and be guilty of any thing but grieving you again.

A B I L.

## A B I L L E T

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to the  
Count de St. ALBIN.

**Y**OUR letter has melted me into tears. Merciful Heaven! what is this mystery which you conceal from me, and on which you will not have me ask you any questions? Do you study to be cruel? and will you make me suffer, if possible, more from the apprehension of it, than from the real evil? I know not what to think, nor what I can have yet to fear. But tell me, tell me all, I conjure you. Shew me, at once, this horror in its most frightful shape. Let me not die by the strength of imagination. I expect your answer before I see you; it may decide a great deal.

## L E T T E R LXVIII.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**H**OW tender, how comforting is the letter you have writ me ! I have kissed it a thousand times. Yet you forgot to tell, what I asked of you yesterday with such earnestness. Oh ! this secret, this secret, which you so obstinately persist to conceal from me, what can it be ? Doubt is cruel, when we fear every thing ; when the imagination creates monsters, and the heart trembles before them.

However, I would fain lull myself into tranquillity, and therefore I believe all you say. Yet if assiduity, your professions, should be more the effect of pity, of any thing than real unextinguishable love, I should detest them. Let me repeat it, if you only consider *me* in what you do, expect nothing from my gratitude. I can be touched by no marks of your tenderness,

derness, in which your own happiness is not solely concerned. But you love me, I may depend upon it. You love only me in the world ; and it is not complaisance that makes you say so; the avowal springs from your heart ?

Surely the man that makes a practice of deceiving women, is to be lamented ; and how should he not ? Persecuted by those he afflicts, he is attracted by one, retained by another ; scolded here, tyrannized there ; and suspected everywhere. He goes on, scattering misery and confusion ; till his arts lose their dangerous efficacy, and he becomes too well known to do mischief any longer.

Candour then, my friend, and ingenuity. Without those, you render others unhappy, and make yourself so too. What you cause is a contagion ; you give love, rather than inspire it. Your enjoyments are imperfect ; and you quickly forfeit the empire you have gained over the most tender hearts.

A man's great happiness should be to be able to say to himself, I make what I love happy. I am all to the being that is all to me. I reign in a sensible mind; and have the satisfaction to know I shall never either grieve, or cool its ardor. These are the pleasures worthy of you; not the gross and vile satisfactions of a moment, bought at the expence of a feeble wretch's peace and reputation; at the expence of your own honour and humanity.

Adieu! But once more this secret, this inquieting secret! I rely upon your promise, and expect you will fulfil it. I have secrets too, alas! but not so easy to conceal.

L E T.



## LETTER LXIX.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE to her  
Friend Madame BREVAL.

I RESPIRE again. He is not to blame, my friend; it is only I am in fault, and yet you hate, you despise him. Indeed, I must keep my mind to myself, if what I say to you has these consequences. But restore him your esteem, I desire; and, if any one of us must suffer, rather take it from me, who have less right to it.

He is faithful; he has been always so; and my suspicions were as unjust as they have been severe. But after all, was he otherwise, no body would have been guilty but I, who had given him too much reason to change. I was captious, humourous; teased him with my jealousies, and I ought to endeavour to make him amends by having more confidence, more attachment; loving him better, if possible, than ever. But is that possible? Why, I think

think it is; and, if I can judge of my heart at this moment, it never before felt sensations so powerful. For it is not sufficient in destroying my fears and my doubts to have softened my sorrows, and soothed even the horrors of my situation; but he has made me absolutely forget them.

To sum up all in a few words. In assuring me of his tenderness, he has shut my eyes to every thing. I have dared to think myself happy, and even to tell him I am so, for I had not the heart to discover to him what must shortly destroy me. I knew it would afflict him; and would you believe, my friend, that I now tremble more for him than for myself! He must know it in the end. Well, let him, when he can be ignorant of it no longer. But why advance the evil? Since it cannot be avoided, he can never be acquainted with it too late.

My condition, horrible as it is, is still the pledge of our union; and, as such, with all its inevitable, frightful consequences, has something in it that renders

ders it dear to me. What then is this imperious ascendant, this inexplicable magic, this strange power of love, which changes our pains into pleasures, rouses courage in the heart of weakness, places glory by the side of misfortune, ennobles defeat, the forgetfulness of ourselves and the world; and makes danger, misery, shame, and despair, so many enjoyments? How is it, that under the weight of woe, and under the yet more terrible pressure of crimes, I can still say I am happy, because I am loved?

LET-

## LETTER LXX.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

WELL, come, let us resume then that agitation of love which makes the misfortune, the inquietude, and the charm of life. Let us resume its troubles, its disorders, its weaknesses, even its tendencies to injustice. Cease to complain of mine: the more profound our passion is, the deeper we are wounded, by not finding from the preferred object, the return which we merit, the price of our kindness, our sacrifices; the consolation of our injuries; a transport equal to our woe.

I confess I trembled, I feared; (and you had given me reason) that I was not as necessary to you as you are to me. But I was far from telling you all the terrors annexed to that idea, and the violence of the anguish which it caused me. The reflection

reflections which ensued, I took for calm of mind, and applauded myself upon it; but that calm was but laziness of spirits, and I soon found despair was at the bottom of it. I neither boasted of a vain courage, nor a false tranquillity. I did not deceive you, though I had deceived myself; but love reclaims its rights: I render you your's, and I hope I shall have no reason to repent.

Ah! take pity on your foolish mistress; such I am, and such shall I always be. I understand nothing of your peaceable passions. I love you with excess; and how should I keep my reason? I have it not; I will have nothing to do with it; and I should be sorry if it returned to me. We should both loose. You would search in vain for the true marks of my love; you would regret my unreasonableness, my extravagance, the flights of my head, the flashes of my heart. You would be loved languidly; I should forgive you every thing, feel nothing; you would be no longer



longer happy; I should be revenged, and then my misfortune would be compleat.

But away with those mortifying images! We are again friends; we are again lovers; and while we are so, what that's disagreeable can affect us? It is the attribute of love to disarm the malice of fortune; she may strike, but we are wrapt in happiness too substantial to feel the stroke. she may deprive, she may inflict; but our sole treasure being in our hearts, no outward efforts can reach it, and we shall enjoy it even in death.

Thus you see the power you have over me. I am at once whatever you would make me. I never was absolute, but I was independent; now and then, perhaps, a little attached to my fancies. I am so now; or, perhaps, I am more so now than ever; for my only desire is to please you. Oh! what a soft, what a ravishing satisfaction to submit our will to those we love! We see only with their eyes to have no soul, no senses, but what they give us,

L E T.

## LETTER LXXI.

From Madame SANCERRE, to her Daughter the Marchioness de SYRCE.

**M**Y dear child, the day before yesterday I married the daughter of our farmer. It was I myself who dressed the bride; and she was as handsome as love and innocence could make her. The wedding feast was in the chateau.

Imagine all the tumult of rustic gaiety: the tuns crown'd with flowers; the wine running every where about; the dances of the young ladies and girls of the neighbourhood (for I invited them all;) the embarrassment of the new-married pair; the timidity of their love; the simplicity of their expressions; and me, in the midst of all, caressed, sung, celebrated, buried in nosegays; chatting with the mothers, embracing the old men, and opening the rural ball. My heart is yet full of joy from  
it;

it ; and I think this little feast has made me younger by at least a dozen years.

It is so pleasing to contribute to the happiness of others, and, at the same time, be witness of it! *Nanette* is called at present Madame Lewis. She is not a little proud of her new name ; and, I believe, she will do no dishonour to that of wife. I preached a great deal to her. She is already prodigiously fond of Mr. Lewis, and appears quite familiarized with his manner, which may not be the less tender, for being a little rough. He is gay, young, and robust ; and there are in these qualities the requisites to make a good labourer, and an excellent husband. I most ardently wish their happiness ; and I have told them over and over again, that they will find it only in attention to all their duties. If they do not believe me, so much the worse for them. But I have better hopes: the pledges of their union will soon come to augment their charms. Far from temptation, in the bosom of tranquil pleasures, directed by nature, faithful to their engagements,

gagements, sensible to honour, and the distinction of a good name, they will be the example of our village, have my friendship to encourage, and the general esteem to recompence them. The bare idea of virtue pleases me ; and I honour wherever I find it.

But why, my dear Marchioness, will you not come and see me ? I know not how it is ; but your letters appear to me constrained and melancholy. I no longer find in them that spirited freedom, those sallies which used to delight me. If you have any thing that vexes you, my child, who so proper as I to participate your griefs ? Who has so just a right to your confidence ? What can be the matter with you ? In a brilliant situation ; caressed every where ; adored by your mother ! what can be wanting to your happiness ? Ah ! I guess it. You find, by the void in your mind, the futility of its distractions ; and that aching inquietude is at once its panegyric, and its punishment.

Endea-

Endeavour, my dear, to see, with my eyes, the world that dazzles your's. I would destroy the enchantments which have hitherto hid from you its dangers, and make you tremble at the precipices, on the brink of which, you have so long played. Your present melancholy even is a light of which you ought to profit to be happy. Consider the state in which you are placed, and do your utmost to answer all its ends: by that means you will be sure of your own approbation; and, without it, you embrace but shadows; or, what is worse, you search for misery.

Why, once more, will you not chuse to come down to me here? In this place you will find repose, adorned with all the charms and freshness of unadulterated nature. Here you will help me to do good in my little circle. What a pleasure is it to do good? How happy do I always go out of a cottage where I have surprized a poor family with unexpected subsistence. I have often heard you say, that the pleasure of pleasing was nothing when compared



pared to that of being useful. What then prevents your enjoying that exquisite sensation? It will detach you from others that give you pain. The benedictions of a country hamlet have a charm superior to the cold homage of all the cities in the world.

Your time of life requires amusements. I know it; but believe me, when the soul is pure, amusements are found everywhere. The simplicity and disorder of my pastoral dances gives me a hundred times more pleasures than the symmetry of those I have seen at court. My ponds, the shrubberies that I have planted, at once concern, and employ me. Those young trees, which you saw first put in the ground, I have since taken such care of, begin already to cover me with their shade; and I long to have you by my side to enjoy under them the freshness of the morning and evening breezes.

But I forgot to tell you. I have had news of Monsieur de Syrcè, whose charge of *inspection* has brought him to the confines

finer of our neighbourhood. He has writ to me ; and never was I in my life more content with a letter ; for it is filled with reproaches of himself, and praises of you, who, he says, is too good for him . . .

Farewell. Above all things I desire you will write to me more gaily. The style of your last letter neither agrees with your age, your education, nor your hopes. In a word, with nothing that you are. When the heart is at ease, the humour is lively ; and, take all together, I am less diffident with regard to your folly, than I am startled at the lowness of your spirits.

I embrace you tenderly. How glad shall I be of Monsieur de Syrcè's return ! I have always told you he was giddy ; and that patience, and your good behaviour, would bring him round. He will change, and that suddenly. What pleasure will you have in pardoning him all !

L E T.

## LETTER LXXII.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Chevalier de GERAC.

OUGHT I to thank fortune, or to accuse it? At this moment, perhaps, poor Hamilton is instructed of all, without my having dared to break the silence. Here, my dear Chevalier, is the circumstance on what I found, shall I say my hopes, or my fears?

Two days ago I paid her a visit. I could not see her immediately; and, in the mean time, went to take a turn in the garden, in that garden which was formerly my paradise. I know not how I came to have about me one of the fine letters I received from Madame de Syrcé, that contains the most lively expressions of happy love. I took it out, and was looking over it in silent rapture, when, all of a sudden, Hamilton, with an air of dejection,

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her

her hair disordered, her eyes tender, appeared at the door of a chamber which opens upon the terras. You may believe I made haste to hide the mark of my apostacy ; but the surprize, the hurry, rendered me inattentive ; and the fatal letter which I meant to secure, no doubt slipped from me.

Looking for it again in the chariot, as I returned to Paris, I could not find it. When I got home, I turned out all my pockets ; but no letter. If I dropt it at Antueil, it has probably fallen into Hamilton's hands. I have not dared to face her since, nor has she sent to me ; so I suffer in the torments of uncertainty ; and it would not be easy to paint a more cruel agitation.

In the flux and reflux of contrary sentiments, I have been obliged to make my peace with Madame de Syrcè. That I could not help doing ; for to live another day on the terms upon which I was with her, I found impossible.

But

But this is not enough. That I may be sure never to put myself in the same pain again, I am resolved to tell her my situation, and all my designs. Do not blame this resolution, my friend; for I must follow it. But, *a propos!* I hear your father is ill, and has sent for you. Shall I be so unfortunate as to lose you?

## LETTER LXXIII.

To the Count de ST. ALBIN, from FANNY,  
a young Person in the Service of Ma-  
demoiselle HAMILTON.

**M**ONSIEUR le Comte, I write to you in the greatest distress. My Lady! my dear Lady! for whom I would a thousand times give my life, has been, for some days, in such profound melancholy, that she speaks to me no more, nor casts her eyes upon me but with looks of distraction, and drowned in tears, which she in vain endeavours to hide.



I cannot imagine what's the matter with her. But is it possible, Monsieur le Comte, is it possible that you should not know? I think it is only through you that Mademoiselle Hamilton can have joy or sorrow. You are her all; and it would break her heart, if she was not all to you. I must take the liberty to open my mind. I cannot conceal my grief; but will tell you, without disguise, all that causes it.

Last night, an hour after she had been in bed, my Lady rose, without calling me, went down into the garden, and walked there alone till day-break this morning. I was awake; and, going to the window, saw her by the light of the moon, which let me distinguish all her motions. She walk'd prodigiously fast, looked as pale as death, and, as she passed under me, upon the the terras, I could hear her sigh, and utter some broken words, among which, once or twice, I plainly distinguished your name.

When she came in again, she went immediately to her escrutoire, and took from thence your letters, and your picture.

She

She wept very loud indeed. After which she threw herself upon the side of her bed, and there continued till my usual hour of entering her apartment. My eyes were red and swelled, I had cry'd so much; and yet I had not dared to interrupt her. She perceived my uneasiness, smiled, and endeavoured to say something to me; but her words were choaked in their passage. However, as I remained at the bed-side, she took me by the hand, kindly pressed it, and desired me to retire.

Ah! Monsieur le Comte, what have you done? For I fear it is you that have thrown my Lady into this situation. And what a woman do you afflict! For heaven's sake come, and endeavour to comfort her; if not, you are the most barbarous and ungrateful of men!

## L E T T E R LXXIV.

From the Count de St. ALBIN, to the  
Marchioness de SYRCE.

I HAVE been silent too long, too long devoured my inquietudes, my remorse, my alarms : too long suffered your's. Know at once my crime, or rather my misfortune ; know, at once, the weakness which has caused you so much uneasiness, and me, if possible, ten times more.

Before I knew you, I loved an object (whom I dare praise, even to yourself) an object adorned with all the graces of her sex ; beautiful in her person, and no less delicate in her mind. I was happy ; I desired nothing but to love, if possible, with greater excess. I saw you, and, in a moment, I was carried from myself, and my soul went over to you, never to return.

I endeavoured to persuade my heart that it was but a false impression. I strove against it : I turned to the charms that had

so

so long possessed me; but they shone to me no more, or only shone to shew me in the strongest colours the superiority of your's. I then persuaded myself that my passion was only a simple desire; that by not giving way to it, it would pass; and I considered my cure as half compleated, when the most detestable of men, whom I shall not name, but you may guess, laid hold of me.

He poisoned me with his counsels, his abandoned principles; associated me, in my own despite, in those vile *manœuvres*, to which he gave that turn which a vicious wit, and the habitude of intrigue so easily suggests. He had particular designs to answer; and what did he do? he laughed at my love, but inflamed my vanity. He proposed you to me, as if you had been at his disposal; on condition, however, that he should be at liberty to divulge my happiness as soon as it should be complete. I shuddered at such a project. He armed against my scruples all the seductions of his infernal eloquence; painted you in

G 4

colours

colours the most opposite to your nature ; put you in the rank of those women, whom every man obtains in his turn ; who is taken without love, and left with contempt ; in fine, the monster so entangled me in the multiplicity of his snares, that at length he weakened my passion, changed its nature, and, in pursuing you, I was rather eager to satisfy a troublesome desire, than to content a delicate sentiment.

How fully are you revenged ! and how much do you deserve to be so ! Conceive what was my trouble, my confusion, and my resentment, against the man who had deceived me, when I knew you better, and your real character unfolded to my view ! When even in the moment of your greatest weakness for me, I saw you display all those virtues which we admire and love ! From that moment I devoted myself to you, as to my fate ; swore to consecrate my days to you, and never own another obligation. All former ties were broken ; and the woman abandoned,

who,



who, against any other rival, would, and ought to have carried the victory.

Yet, will you believe it? These sentiments were followed by the most lively remorse; the sight of that woman, the memory of our mutual happiness, our engagements, the consciousness of feeling no longer that tenderness for her which I had formerly professed; all those things rose to my imagination. On the other hand, I considered myself as your undoer; the betrayer of your innocence, the destroyer of your peace, your reputation; in short, I know not what madness seized me; but this was the state of my mind; and the real and sole cause of that behaviour which you have so long complained of, and of which you shall never have reason to complain again.

I thought I was acting the part of a generous man; but such exertions of generosity are beyond the strength of frail humanity; and what in theory seemed only difficult, became impossible to practise. Forgive, then, my affected absence,

my studied coldness ; (I have already suffered too much from them, to deserve farther punishment ;) and receive a rebel, a deserter, who returns to his duty with pleasure, and solicits his pardon with a true penitence.

For your rival, (if any woman has a right to be so) she already knows I am lost to her ; and I shall see her no more. In a word, I adore, I love you better than ever, love you to madness ; do not reject the proofs I give you of it, but be generous in your turn ; pity me, love me ; and make me forget, in the raptures of our passion, every thing but the joys that result from it.

L E T.

## LETTER LXXV.

From the Marchionefs de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

WHAT have you told me! You have carried death to my heart. Scarce am I yet recovered from the swoon which followed the reading of your letter, that fatal letter where my condemnation is written, and signed by your hand.

You have loved another then; you loved her even when you made the warmest professions of a passion for me; for it is in vain you endeavour to palliate your outrage by declarations, to which I give no credit. I carried you not from yourself, Monsieur le Comte; I brought not over your heart; I was followed as a casual vanity, only to enliven your flame for another; and, having answered your purpose, I had nothing to expect but desertion.

But you say you will abandon this woman, whoever she is ; you swear it. Perhaps you would. Cruelties and perfidies, it seems, cost you little. But you shall not be inhuman on my account. I must die, I am certain of it; and I will not purchase a short possession, at the expence of another's happiness. It is me, in justice, you ought to banish from your heart; it is me you ought to see no more. Return to your first vows ; I give you leave ; I even implore you against myself.

Besides, when you talk of future fidelity, who shall answer for the truth of your assurances? It is by an ill-grounded confidence in what you said to me, that I have already drawn upon myself evils, which the grave only can hide. In that indefensible credulity lies a great part of my fault ; I rashly threw myself into arms that had no place for me.. Yes, Monsieur le Comte, I am, at least as blameable as you ; and I ought to be punished for it. Once more, then, let me repeat it ; go back to a deserving woman ; to whom,

no

no doubt, you made promises, as well as to me: those promises probably betrayed her; and sure you must unavoidably be perjured on one side or other: there is no room for hesitation.

If, as you pretend, you would really renounce my rival; if I have always had the ascendant in your heart, and I am now more dear to you than ever, let my rival enjoy the sacrifice I make her; let her triumph when I am in the grave.

You have undone me; but no matter, I forgive you; I will not even tell you the degree of the injury I have received from you: may it never come to your knowledge; may you always be ignorant of what must give you a mortal anguish to know. I will go farther; I will confess, that the protestations you make me in your letter, whether false or true, render somewhat less horrible to me the barbarity of which I am the victim; and though I see before me all my crime and my shame, though I find no more motive for courage, though I sink under the fate that oppresses

fes



ses me; there is a consoling illusion in the thought of your loving, while you kill me.

## A B I L L E T

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Marchioness de SYRCE.

**Y**OUR letter has filled me with horror and admiration. But what is the degree of injury which you have not yet told me? What is it the mysteriousness, the trouble of your style, announces, and I dare not interpret? I fly to throw myself at your feet, and force a secret from you, which appears to weigh upon your heart. . . . I did not think it was possible for me to be more wretched than when I wrote to you last; . . . and yet I see I may be yet even more than I am. . . . All that I imagine terrifies me; . . . but I will know the worst. Prepare to see, and satisfy me.

L E T.

## LETTER LXXVI.

From Mademoiselle HAMILTON to FANNY,  
a young Person in her Service.

**M**Y dear Fanny, by the time that this paper falls into your hands, I shall be far from Antueil. Give yourself no trouble to discover the cause of my departure, or the place of my retreat; let it suffice that I have taken care of you.

Monsieur Ferney, the banker, who has the care of my affairs at Paris, will be with you to-morrow morning. If there are debts of any kind, he has orders to pay them; and will discharge the landlord as soon as you can remove, or otherwise dispose of, the furniture of the house; which I give you, with all the wearing-apparel that I leave behind me. Should you have a mind to return to England, Monsieur Ferney will take care to put you in a proper method of going there safely and commodiously. He will supply  
your

your expences, and give you such a farther sum of money as, though much short of the merit of your faithful services, will, I hope, convince you of my gratitude and regard.

I should beg your pardon for not trusting you with the design I have for some time conceived of quitting the world; but I thought it would give you pain to know we were soon doomed to part, never to meet again; and if I still make a mystery to you of the reasons that have induced me to the conduct I follow, it is only because it can in no sort concern you to know them. You may believe something very particular, and of a nature not to be remedied, forces me to act as I do. But I particularly beg of you, on no account whatsoever, either in France or elsewhere, ever forget your mistress so far, as, at any time, to let a word escape you in dispraise of the Count de St. Albin. I give you this caution, because, from some things I have casually dropt, and observations you may have made on my actions,

you

you may be led to imagine, that it is from a rupture between him and me. I have taken a distaste to society : in that case I know your partiality to me ; and you would not fail to suppose the Count in fault ; when, perhaps, the crime is all of my side.

There is one thing I shall make no secret to you. I loved the Count de St. Albin ; and I still continue to love him, though I renounce him ; and we shall have for the future nothing in common beside a religion that offers me an asylum, and will soon separate us for ever. I hope I shall there love him no more ; it will be my duty to direct my ardor elsewhere ; but I shall always pray for his happiness ; that will be my duty too, and not the least pleasing part of it ; for he deserves a great share of happiness ; even though I should have some reason to find fault with him.

Adieu. Take care to burn this ; and to put into the Count's own hands, or that of his valet de chambre, the letter you will

will find in the drawer of my dressing-table, directed for him. I will not take a more formal and affectionate farewell of you, least I should affect you too much. I know you will require all your fortitude to bear the loss of a mistress, who has been so many years your companion and your friend.

## LETTER LXXVII.

From Mademoiselle HAMILTON to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**I** SHALL not condescend to the vain weakness of reproaches, at a time when I have occasion to exert all the strength of my reason. I read the evidence of your falsehood, which hazard, or your address, threw in my way : yet I should have hesitated to decide, had it not been corroborated by concurring testimonies to a degree of proof that admits neither doubt nor palliation. You have  
deceived



deceived me, Monsieur le Comte; and you shall see me no more.

Regret not my doom: I flatter myself it will be far from deserving commiseration: and I regret nothing in a world, where simplicity and sensibility seem to be the intended prey of treason and ingratitude.

The woman who once sought, and now flies you, voluntarily secludes herself in search of peace, where she will patiently attend the dissolution of her mortal part. For you deceived yourself if you imagined your perfidy would drive me to a desperation capable of arming me against my life. Had you died before you lost my esteem, I should most undoubtedly have followed you; but being debased in my eyes, I consider our fates as divided, and will live, not to hate, (for the object of my contempt cannot deserve it) but to efface, if possible, in my own opinion, the shame of having ever loved you.

L E T.

## L E T T E R LXXVIII.

From Mademoiselle HAMILTON, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**B**EFORE I dismiss the person who accompanies me to this place; before I enter a retreat, where folly and immorality can no more reach me, I know not what involuntary motion forces me to write to you. It is not anger; and it is yet less love. What is it, then? No matter.

Were you only inconstant, I might pity you, lament your misfortune, and perhaps my own; but to a faulty temperament, you join the unworthy qualities of falsehood and deceit. I have, therefore, lost nothing; nay, I gain, in being divided somewhat sooner than I might have been from a man, whom I must have become acquainted with one time or other; and with whom, as soon as I knew him, I should certainly have disdained to associate. Take back your promises then, which I annul;

your

your oaths, which I forget. I even pardon your treachery ; pardon every thing but that confidence, security, and blind love, which put it in your power to practise on a woman, of whom you are unworthy.

As for the mistaken creature that has robbed me of your heart, I am far from accusing her ; she neither inspires me with aversion nor envy. I am sorry for her. Perhaps you will send her to die, where you send me : for be assured, Monsieur le Comte, the man who a love like mine could not fix, cannot for a long time be held by any. He that abandoned me, cannot be content ; nor will you : and that volatility will prove your punishment.

I had formed to myself a dazzling system ; but you have opened my eyes to my errors, and convinced me of the falaciousness of my ideas. I thought myself in a situation to be preferred to all others ; but I now see it is the last a woman should chuse, who would not be degraded and destroyed. I have been at once weak and  
wilful,

wilful, and I will bring myself to a severe account for it. If at any time hereafter, then, my melancholy image should rise to your mind, pale, disfigured, torn by the hair-cloth, stretched on the earth, watering the ashes with repentant tears ; think not I suffer because you have been worthless and unjust ; it is religion chastising the perversity of nature ; it is the Divinity correcting his work, to bring it nearer perfection, before he takes it to himself.

But I feel my eyes fill with tears, and my heart swell. Sinful eyes, and reprobate heart ! whither would you mislead me ? Farewell, Monsieur le Comte ; for all I have said, I am not your enemy, nor need you pity me ; for I throw myself into the arms of my God, and am not your victim.

L E T.

## LETTER LXXIX.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Chevalier de GERAC.

I AM under a grief and consternation that cannot be expressed! I did not think it possible for any thing to affect me so strongly; at least, that the event which has happened, could have given me so much pain.

The poor unfortunate Hamilton! She has left Anteuil; and either the servants, who have staid behind her in the house, really know nothing of where she is gone, or they are obstinate in keeping it a secret from me. The account her maid gives is, that about four o'clock on Sunday morning last, her mistress set off with an elderly woman, who was a stranger to them all, and called upon her in a post-chaise.

She had been at Paris two days before, and staid a considerable time, as she pretended,



tended, at her banker's ; yet, on going to enquire of him, I find the banker as unsatisfactory in what he says about her as any one else. He has probably had his instructions. She carried with her only a small bundle, which she made up the night before she disappeared, unknown to her maid ; a thing the more extraordinary, as that maid was a person in whom, upon all other occasions, she has shewn a very great degree of confidence. She left a letter for me : the above-mentioned maid delivered it ; and, at the same time, shewed me one written to herself ; which moved me to a degree of tenderness and sorrow I could hardly support.

Having laid down my pen for half an hour, I have in the interim received another letter from Hamilton. It has been put into the penny-post at Paris ; and leaves me no room to doubt of her having taken refuge in some Convent. In this letter, as well as in her first, she declares she despises and abhors me. I deserve it. Indeed, what have I not deserved ? For, alas !

my

my friend, you are, as yet, acquainted with but a small part of my enormities. Hamilton can only reproach me with inconstancy and ingratitude; but towards Madame de Syrcè, I am guilty of every crime possible.

That most delicate, most estimable, most charming of women! how shall I tell you!—she is lost . . . . lost even to me . . . . I have dishonoured her beyond reparation; perhaps I shall be the cause of her death; and these are the fruits of my love. I dare not tell you more; I dare not trust it to paper . . . . but you understand me, perhaps—I am assailed on all sides.

Can you prevail upon yourself to quit me? but you must, I know you must; and you depart to-morrow; good God! to-morrow.

I hear that the villain who has been the cause of all my afflictions, is in the provinces, where he seeks new victims; but it shall not be long before he answers to me severely for myself and others. I

thought him my friend! Excuse my distraction; and a thousand times farewell!

## A B I L L E T

From the Chevalier de GERAC to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**Y**ES, I part; and I part unhappy. I pity your two victims; I lament you. You have even the greatest share of my concern, because you are culpable. Nothing but the illness of a beloved father should, at this time, force me to abandon you. Write to me; I desire I may have my share in all your inquietudes: it is a friend's privilege, and I will not relinquish it. You may, at least, depend upon my fidelity, if you can derive no advantages from my utility.

L E T.

## LETTER LXXX.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Marchioness de SYRCE.

**I**S it possible, after my crime, after the terrible discovery you have made me of it, that you can yet pardon me; that you can yet suffer me to vent my sighs in your bosom! You even grieve for the woman's misfortunes, who has caused a part of your's: and thus it is you revenge yourself! Oh my love! your gentleness, your generosity, seem only to increase my guilt. Load me with your reproaches, your indignation; paint me your situation in all its horrors; endeavour to poison my wounds; pour despair into my lacerated heart! such is the treatment I should meet with; such only is the notice that my prayers and expressions of sorrow ought to obtain!

I found you pure, innocent, and happy. Why did I not leave you so? The savage

brutality is not to be excused. I gave way to the vile disorder of my senses, while you were only actuated by holy love; and the fatal instant of my fury has intailed upon you misfortune and dishonour; shall force those charming eyes to look down with shame; to fear the regards of a husband, of a mother, of the world! Yet I live, and you love me; you even strive to hide from me your pains! A stranger to repose, fatigued with weeping, a prey to every terror, you are cautious how you disturb my tranquillity, and deprive yourself of your sole comforter! How vile, how detestable does such goodness make me!

But now listen to me. Things must not remain in the state they are; since you tell me, that you and your precious fruit are mine, it is my interest, my duty, to preserve them; and I claim my right. You must not expose yourself to the event of a discovery. Monsieur de Syrcè is absent; Madame de Sancerre happily out of the way; let us wrap ourselves in the shade  
of



of mystery. Love has always been industrious to veil its crimes: and make no doubt but mine will find the means. The unfortunate infant, whom I doat on before I see it, shall live then; nor shall its birth be fatal to its mother. I will find a retreat; I will provide the necessary succours. When it comes into the world, I will hide it in my bosom; no one shall hear it cry; in fine, all shall be done in secret, and nothing transpire.

You may afterwards return, appear. What can the most malicious alledge against you? Suspensions are not proofs; nor does the world always wish to push its suspicions to certainties.

## LETTER LXXXI.

From Madame de SANCERRE to her Daughter the Marchioness de SYRCÈ.

**M**Y dear daughter, only object of my tendernefs, I am under the greateft uneafinefs on your account. I receive letters every day from Paris, which give me the moft melancholy ideas of your health. They tell me your countenance is entirely changed, that you grow lean, are languid ; in fhort, that you alter continually for the worfe : and the extreme heavinefs of your letters leave me little room to doubt of the truth of my advices.

I fhall leave this place in two days, in order to return to town ; if you are fick, to nurfe you ; if you are low-fpirited, to comfort and affift you with my advice. Monfieur de Syrcè may poffibly accompany me. He is extremely unquiet at the thought of your indifpofition, and charges  
me

me to mark to you his affliction in the strongest and most tender terms.

If it be not wholly incompatible with his business to absent himself a few days, I shall certainly bring him to you in my hand. Heaven bless you! my beloved child. I am impatient till I embrace you.

## A B I L L E T

From the Marchioness de SYRCE to the  
Count de St. ALBIN.

**I** AM undone. Let me see you directly. I am lost for ever. I have received a letter from my mother; and her letter is death. She returns to Paris, and Monsieur de Syrcè comes with her. I can say no more; but come to me, if you would save my life. Adieu.

## A B I L L E T

From the Marchioness de SYRCE to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**I**T is now two hours after midnight, and my mother arrived as the clock struck ten. Thank Heaven, I begin to take a little breath; for Monsieur de Syrcè is not with her s his employment would not suffer him to come. My poor mother loads me with caresses, which are so many strokes which she gives me with a poniard; for I am reduced to that strange degree of distress, that the tenderness of a parent is one of my greatest miseries. I think it renders me somehow more criminal. I have not yet dared to look at her stedfastly, lest she should read in my eyes the confusion of my soul. In short, I fear every thing; but if you love me, it is all very well. Don't come to-morrow. I will let you know the events of the day by a line. Adieu. I am exceedingly dejected . . . .  
But

But remember, once more, that I am not to see you to-morrow. . . . The day will be long.

## L E T T E R LXXXII.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**P**ITY, and forbear to accuse me. I have betrayed you. I have betrayed myself. I am the most unfortunate of women. I am scarce alive while I write to you; and I know not whether I shall have sufficient strength to describe a scene which I ought not to survive; and which I shall not survive long.

After supper this night, I went with my mother into the great saloon. During the whole day I thought she had regarded me in a manner more than ordinarily attentive; and, at that moment, she had an air of coolness, not speaking to me, or at least with a tone less affectionate than usual. She sat down to her frame of



embroidery, and took a book from the chimney-piece, pretending to read. A dead silence reigned. I dared not break it. I was afraid to raise my eyes ; but, in spite of my efforts, I let fall some tears, and those tears destroyed me.

My mother perceived I was crying ; and, quitting her work, fixed her eyes upon me. That look, which I accidentally met, though it was rather earnest than severe, thunder-struck me. “ Daughter,” said she, “ what’s the matter with you ?” She had no sooner spoke, than my heart swelled, my bosom throbbed, and my tears gushed from me in a torrent. My mother rose in a fright, and came towards me. “ Daughter,” continued she, “ what is the meaning of this trouble ; this grief ? You make me tremble !” I rushed into her arms ; hid my face in her bosom ; and continued there some time without answering her. At length, lifting up my head a little, I could only get out, “ Oh ! Madam.”—My agony, my confusion, the shame of my condition, writ,

writ, in spite of me, in my eyes, no doubt opened her's, though it was plain she had suspicions before. . . . " I understand you," cry'd she, pushing me from her, and throwing herself into a chair at the other end of the room, " Unhappy child ! my observations have not deceived me ; I durst not believe my eyes ; but you have dishonoured yourself, and your family." " Yes," replied I, dropping on my knees in the same place where I stood, and clasping my hands together, " I am an unfortunate  
 " wretch ; a woman lost to herself and  
 " the world, and unworthy of being call-  
 " ed your daughter. Banish me from your  
 " sight then ; never look upon me again : your  
 " rigour will be a benefit, and I shall bless  
 " the hand that strikes me into the earth.  
 " I am with child, Madam, the fruit of  
 " an infamous intrigue. Only shield and  
 " assist me, till I bring the miserable be-  
 " ing, formed of your blood, into the  
 " world. It is all the grace and favour I  
 " demand, and afterwards I shall be glad  
 " to perish. I will chuse some solitude to

“ hide my shame, where my last sighs  
 “ shall never reach you. I am my own  
 “ judge ; I condemn myself ; but you, in-  
 “ sensible husband, whom I loved, whom  
 “ I doated on, contemplate, with horror,  
 “ the consequences of your conduct ! My  
 “ ignominy is your’s. You are the cause  
 “ of my misfortunes. Was it not for you,  
 “ the heart of a mother would never have  
 “ been estranged from me ! She never  
 “ could have trembled at the sight of me,  
 “ nor have pushed me weeping from her  
 “ arms !”

I could not proceed ; grief choaked my  
 words, and I felt myself sinking to the  
 ground, when my mother hastened to raise  
 me ; she embraced me, and my neck was  
 in an instant wet with her tears. We  
 wept in concert for some time, mute, and  
 clasped in each other’s arms. At last,  
 “ Calm yourself,” said she ; “ you melt  
 “ me ; nature speaks, and I cannot be  
 “ deaf to her voice. Be comforted ; I  
 “ will do my utmost to cover your crime,  
 “ your weakness. The supreme Being  
 “ par-

“pardons ; and neither honour nor religion teaches us to be inexorable. But, oh my dear, undone, unfortunate child !” exclaimed she, bursting afresh into an agony of tears, “the Count de St. Albin, is it not he ? Swear to me never to see again the author of your misfortune.”

Think, my friend, what passed in my soul at that dreadful moment. I wrung my hands ; I caught hold of my mother’s, and gave her a look which, perhaps, she understood ; for she did not repeat her proposition, and I promised nothing. Alas ! it is easier to die than to tear from one’s heart the object that at once enchants and dishonours it. And under the eyes of a mother, before an offended God, who punishes me, and whose indignation, perhaps, my temporal sufferings will not satisfy, the fear of relinquishing you was my greatest terror.

Adieu. My trembling hand is able to hold the pen no longer. . . . My candles are out. I am all in the dark, and I dare not ring for my woman. I know not what  
dis-

dismal image presents itself to my imagination. I am not well.—A burning, succeeded by a chillness, every now and then seizes me, and my head is splitting in a thousand pieces.

L E T T E R LXXXIII.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Marchioness de SYRCE.

**M**Y dearest creature, what have you done? Your indiscretion has thrown me into the greatest perplexity. You have made three people wretched. You should have paid more attention to what I said to you. You should have placed all your confidence in me. What madness to admit a third person between us, let that person be who it would!

What will become of me, if I am not permitted to see you? What will become of you? I would rather die a thousand deaths. For the first time I have wept; your letter drew tears from me; but not those  
tears



tears that discharge and enlighten the heart. The consciousness of your situation is still there, and fills me with sorrow and distraction.

Believe me. Let us not confine ourselves to complaints, and a painful attendance of our fate. Let us prevent the cruelty of the world by escaping from it; leave it but your shadow to vent its senseless rage upon. In our love we may find a resource to defend us against the injuries of society.

If your mother persists in her design to separate us, if she has the inhumanity to reiterate her proposition that you should see me no more, we are united; those ties, though illegitimate by custom, are sacred to you and me. I cannot live without you. None but I can console you in your sufferings. We are necessary to each other. Let us fly together. Why should we stand confounded before a blind and tyrannical multitude, who have conventions in lieu of sentiments; forms in lieu of virtues; and ferocious prejudices instead of the calm delights

lights of reason? Let us not hesitate a moment to evade a country where the laws even are an encouragement to crimes, and a phantom of honour rises upon a thousand hidden atrocities to insult nature.

With you, with the dear treasure you bear along with you, I shall have all I wish, and envy no one. Abandon your relations, I will quit mine. Renounce the vain chimeras of rank, I will renounce my hopes. Follow me; we will seek a place where the inhabitants have pity by instinct, and not inhumanity by principle.

There are people whom we call savage. They will serve us; they will admire our firmness, our love. Your courageous attachment to those holy laws, the sacrilegious infraction of which, in sparing you the punishment of blushes, would have stained your soul with parricide.

At the extremities of the earth, in whatever climate we inhabit, we shall find a natural bounty, ready to pardon our weaknesses, and assuage our griefs. We shall not find laws established by barbarous fanatics,

fanatics, but that tender sensibility, the universal mover of all beings, where our political institutions have not corrupted them. Infamy will not follow you there; it will rest with those who would unjustly cast it upon you. My wife, yes, my wife by my side, and my child in my arms, I shall be a stranger no where. Where-ever the hearts melt at misfortunes, there will be our country.

You may say to the universe, " I had  
 " a husband whom I thought fond and  
 " faithful ; my soul was entirely his. I  
 " cultivated, with a restless tenderness,  
 " the fruits of our union. That husband  
 " abandoned me, despised me for the vilest  
 " creatures. Young, and with a heart  
 " sensible to passion, I felt the necessity of  
 " love, and gave myself to the object I  
 " thought most worthy of me. There is  
 " my crime, the cause of all my misfor-  
 " tunes, of the persecutions I suffer, of  
 " the voluntary exile to which I, and the  
 " partner of my fault, expose ourselves."

This,

This, my life, is what you will say, and all hearts will be moved by it.

Dare to adopt the advice I give you ; dare to put it in execution. I will come this evening, and satisfy you at large of what I have in idea. Condemn not the design as romantic ; it is founded in prudence, in reason ; and I cannot bear the thought of your dishonour.

Our faithful emissary, in leaving your letter this morning, told me you was ill, and had not been able to rise, though it was then late. Be careful of your health ; that is of all things the most consequential. I shall come at five o'clock. Manage so as I may be admitted without difficulty or disturbance. Think of seconding my courage ; and remember I am ready to undertake every thing in order to snatch you from the injustice of a society which does not deserve to possess you.

L E T.

## LETTER LXXXIV.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Marchioness de SYRCE.

**T**HERE then is arrived the misfortune which I dreaded; which I foresaw. Your door is shut against me. I have been at it eight times since yesterday evening, and always the same answer, you are not to be seen. Your people appear in consternation.

While I was just now talking to the porter, Sophy passed. She was in tears. She tells me you are very much indisposed, and that you continue to keep your bed. I will see you; or die in the attempt. I will not quit your house; but walk before it night and day till I get admittance. By Heavens! I must see you. My angel! my heart is breaking. If this is delivered to you, pity my situation; and allow me only a sight of a moment. A word, and a look  
is



is all I ask: and can that be refused to my earnest supplication?

It will even be prudence to grant my request; for what must your servants imagine? So many times a day presenting myself before your door—and I cannot help it. Till I see you, I shall never be satisfied.

## L E T T E R LXXXV.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to SOPHY,  
one of the Marchioness de SYRCE's  
Women.

**S**HE is dying, and I must not see her! She is dying, and I live! Sophy, my dear Sophy, in the name of humanity, by all that is sacred, I conjure you, endeavour, by some means or other, to obtain me an instant's consolation.

You say that, in her ravings, she has talked continually of me. Perhaps my presence . . . . Who can tell?—At least it can do no harm. Alas! What is there to fear?

fear? Do not refuse me then; but take an opportunity, when Madame de Sancerre is absent, to introduce me into your Lady's chamber. Perhaps you may save her life. You will certainly prolong mine.

You tell me that Madame Breval has sat up with her four nights. For what reason then am I banished? . . . Great God! I, who would open every vein in my body to assuage her least uneasiness! and shall the ineffectual efforts of friendship be accepted, while the salutary offers of love, of solicitous, willing love, are refused? If she dies, I will not survive her. I swear it to Heaven, which I hope hears, and will punish me if I forget my oath. But I confide in your compassion to preserve what is more precious to me than life.

I leave this for you myself, and shall wait within sight of the hotel, till I receive some answer from you. If you can help me to an interview, you need but look out of any of the windows that front the street to see and make me a sign. I will immediately attend you.

L E T.

## LETTER LXXXVI.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**I** AM come sufficiently to myself to be able to write ; and you shall have the small remains of life that is left me. Be not alarmed ; nor give yourself up to sorrow, I beseech you in the name of the most tender love. I think I am better ; better a great deal.

You must not be angry with me for not seeing you, nor with the people, who only obey my mother ; and scarcely any one is admitted, so that makes her orders seem less particular with regard to you. I think I shall recover ; and yet I wish they had not shewn me a letter from Monsieur de Syrcè. It is addressed to Madame de Sancerre, and came to town by express. He recommends me in the most tender manner to her care, and says a thousand kind things,

things, accusing himself, and extolling me, alas! me.

But all my pains and vexations are trifling, are nothing, if you love me the better for them: nay, in that case, I shall even be happy, and wish to suffer more. . . Though I am writing to you, I feel myself fatigued; and, after all, I scarce believe you will be able to read what I have written, it is so scrawled. Adieu, dear friend. I think I should be sorry to quit a world that you remain in, though death only can save me from shame.

**LET**

## LETTER LXXXVII.

From the Chevalier de GERAC to the  
Marchionefs de SYRCE.

**Y**OUR letter, Madam, has penetrated me with grief and esteem; and those just effects give me some feeble hopes that I am not intirely unworthy of the confidence with which you honour me.

How sublime is your way of thinking, and how well does your present conduct justify the character which your unhappy friend and mine gives of you! Not that I repent of having formerly opposed in him that growing opinion. I did no more than I am persuaded you would have done in my place. I would have prevented, in its beginning, a passion which I saw big with mischief and misfortune. I consulted my heart, and spoke as I would have acted; but I shall never console myself for not having had an earlier opportunity of becoming



coming acquainted with all those exalted qualities to which I was to do homage.

The Count de St. Albin, no doubt, must have informed you of the many pressing instances, the repeated arguments I made use of to dissuade him from a connection which threatens to be so fatal to you both. What generosity, what courage, what heroism then, at this moment, to address yourself to me ! You are pleased to charge me with the cruel care of comforting him, and preserving his days, at a time when every body but yourself, trembles for your's. But, no, Madam ! My friend will not have the misfortune to lose you. Heaven owes you to the world, not to expiate a fault, already more than atoned for, but to raise you from it, with new lustre, and give an example in your revived virtues !

I know not how to express the manner in which I am affected upon your account. Only suffer me to share the enthusiasm, but too just ; and the hopes of my friend. I promise most faithfully, to obey

the orders you give me : however, it is in the certitude I feel of never being under the sad necessity to fulfil them.

I should have been supremely happy to assure you, on a less melancholy occasion, of my profound respect. I make no doubt the time will come to afford me that felicity. Till then, deign to accept of the most sacred assurances of my attachment.

## LETTER LXXXVIII.

From the Chevalier de GERAC to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**H**AVE courage, my dear Count ; take comfort, and be speedy to give me news of Madame de Syrcè and yourself. Is that charming woman better or worse ? I have catched all your uneasiness with regard to her ; and tremble for her fate, as if my own was involved in it.

The way I left you in, the pain I suffer at not being near you, and the reason of my absence, the dismal situation of my poor father,

father, all unite to make me miserable. Then, your silence has something in it frightful. Pray endeavour to give me a little ease. You used to be fond of your pen; and it can be no trifling matter that gives you a distaste to it. A word or two, by return of the post, I intreat you.

## LETTER LXXXIX.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to the  
Count de ST. ALBIN.

**T**HIS letter should not go to you, written in any hand but my own, was it possible to hide from you my situation. But we must submit, and prepare to part. For you, I conjure you to take care of yourself. It is on my death-bed I desire it of you; where the request of a friend has the force of commands.

I cannot believe, that in quitting this life, I shall cease to love you; for something survives our bodies, nor am I without hopes that we shall meet again. But for

the world we now inhabit, my doom is pronounced, and I shall behold you here no more !

The eyes which opened but for you, and sought you, even when drowned in the tears you caused to flow, are going to close in endless darkness. Farewell then. There is but one wish I could form, was Heaven disposed to grant it: Might I live to put into your hands the innocent fruit of our crime, methinks it would be a token that would keep my idea still alive in your heart: But that cannot be !

Alas ! poor infant ! Doomed to suffer the punishment of its unfortunate mother, it will be deprived of life before it enjoys it. I go to extinguish the flame which yet scarcely animates its little form; in that gulf of darkness where I plunge myself; in that impenetrable shade, where we hear the voice of those we love. Yet I think, to have been in a state to nurse, to support it, I could even have braved infamy.

But great, and merciful Creator ! You that chasten where you love, let me not  
repine

repine at your decrees. I am justly punished; and, even in the midst of my sufferings, will bless your correcting hand, so it strikes but me. Spare, oh, spare !....

\* Monsieur le Comte, my Lady having dictated thus far of the above letter, which I writ by her command, was seized with a fainting that prevented her finishing it; but, as I know her desire, and your impatience to hear from her, I send it as it is. I am sorry your valet-de-chambre has been obliged to wait in the street so long.

My Lady is just come to herself again; and seems pretty well recovered. She desires me to send you the letter, and make an apology for the abrupt conclusion. We are in a sad, sorrowful way. Poor, dear soul, I am afraid we shall lose her!

\* The remainder of the letter is finished by one of Madame de Syrcè's women, who was her emanensis.



## LETTER XC.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to  
Madame de SANCERRE.

**M**ADAM, by the temerity of my proceedings, you may judge of the excess of my concern. Despair knows no decorum; it ought to interest, even by its violence; and if the unfortunate have ever been able to melt you, you will hear me with compassion; and forget that I am guilty, in beholding me so completely miserable.

Your daughter, I understand, is dying; your daughter, the most charming, and, I dare add, the most respectable of women, she is dying, and I am the fatal cause! yet I think, was I permitted to see her, I might be the means of her recovery. It is you, then, Madam, to whom I have recourse, in order to obtain a favour, on which, perhaps, the life of that excellent person depends. I say nothing of my  
own,

own, which is a burthen to me ; I only implore for Madame de Syrcè.

There are times when certain delicacies should go for nothing, when nature only ought to speak, and ought alone to be heard. Whatever indiscretion I may have occasioned, whatever crime I may have committed, I have a title ; and though the means by which I acquired it may be condemned by the world, it should not, in this instance, be rejected. Madame de Syrcè has thought me worthy of her regard ; her heart is wholly mine ; its last throbbings will be for me ; I know it ; and, in denying me her presence, you rob her of the only cordial, the only consolation she is capable of receiving !

I beseech you then, Madam, in favour of a case of such imminent necessity, relax a little the severity of your principles. Pity is the first of human virtues ; and who knows but your inflexibility may cost you tears. Tremble, lest you should become yourself an accomplice in what you

will, one day, think the greatest misfortune that could have happened to you.

Suppose you see me before you on my knees, full of repentance; I dare not say full of love. Imagine my sorrow, my anxiety, my inexpressible anguish; and let my sufferings affect you so far, as to gain me admittance to see the dear creature a minute, one single minute!

My image is impressed upon her mind in colours not to be defaced. It increases her grief, it heightens her disorder. The remembrance of me kills her. The sight of me will calm all her pains, it is my firm hope and belief. Do not betray them. Let her be witness of the part I bear in her sufferings; let her see my altered figure; and, if I must lose her, if I must be torn from myself, let me catch her last sigh, and mingle mine with it.

But why do I talk of losing her? Heaven will not make so many wretches at once. Just God! you that pardon foibles, oh! my God, if your arm be roused, suspend the dreadful stroke! in letting it fall, you  
will

will rob mortals of your most perfect image. If a victim be necessary, behold one that is ready; or if you would be yet more severe, if my life is not a sufficient sacrifice, fill my days with bitterness to a painful old age; and, at last, make me purchase death by some unheard-of misfortune; but save, save her I love! All her sufferings let me endure; let me feel them with double weight, till I sink under them!

You see, Madam, I am almost distracted: may my frenzy touch you. I beseech you, in the name of my tears, my torments, of my crimes even; it is they that throw at your feet a madman, a monster: who, conducted by an impetuous passion, has undone an angel, and destroyed her peace! Shudder at me; but pity me, as I am too unhappy to excite your anger. Send me then an answer, such as I deserve, such as the most wretched have a right to expect from the charitable.

## L E T T E R X C I.

From the Count de St. ALBIN to the  
Marchioness de SYRCE.

**W**E must prepare to part! who tells you so? pay no credit to them; we shall yet live many years to make each other happy. Listen not to the barbarians that deceive you; believe only your lover, your friend, who gives you better hopes.

Yet you bid me adieu! You take a last farewell of me, and in terms that speak but too feelingly your serious thoughts of quitting the world. In the name of my love I charge you; in the name of that tender, unfortunate, and desperate passion that possesses my soul, collect your strength, and resist the fate that threatens you. If there is a just Being above us, he watches over your days; he protects, he loves you. My tears will melt him; and if he disunites us, his happiness, however supreme,



preme, will be troubled by the excess of my grief. But fear nothing: methinks while I live, even Heaven itself can have no power to hurt you.

But what! at the gates of death! on the brink of the grave, could you think of writing to me! I have put your letter upon my heart, where it shall always be preserved; that precious letter, the proof of a sensibility without example. It is not in your hand, but it contains all your soul; a soul at once tender, courageous, and profound: a true ray of the Divinity. And shall that celestial emanation lose its properties? shall it feel no more the effects of love? shall it be extinguished in the tomb? and I, villain! and I, did I become acquainted with you, only to be your executioner?

Oh! implacable fate; that, under the smiling attraction of pleasure, hid such poisonous and destructive fruits! Our babe too, our poor babe, that also must perish; and I shall be at once the murderer of both mother and child! My head turns

when I look towards the horrid abyss before me. Yet the bolt has not yet fallen; perhaps our prayers may divert its course; at least, I will cherish the illusion. I have written to Madame de Sancerre; she will permit me to see, to speak to you; to breathe health and comfort into your dying bosom. Oh! might I do so with the surrender of my life, how blest'd, how happy should I think myself!

The kind and faithful Sophy promises to deliver this into your own hands; and that she will chuse a moment when you are least feeble, to read it to you. You will find in it some faint images of the love you inspire me with, the fears that devour, and the hopes that support me.

Adieu, my friend, my mistress, the wife of my heart! . . . Your mother sends me no answer; and all the comfort I have, is to gaze on your picture, weep over, and complain to it, as if it was sensible of my anguish. But you will live, I know you will; and then all will be well. My trouble has been so great, that for five  
nights

nights I have never closed my eyes: but when I have seen you, I shall be more composed; and I flatter myself you will be better.

## A B I L L E T

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to SOPHY,  
one of the Marchionefs de SYRCE's  
Women\*.

DEAR Fanny, I will not fail to be at the post you appoint, at the hour you mention; and I shall take care to disguise myself so, that none of your people can know me. Madame de Sancerre has a harder heart than I imagined; but we can do without her. I know not how to express my gratitude to you; yet, no doubt you act only in consideration of your lady. She endeavoured, you say, to read some lines of my letter herself, but was

\* French ladies of quality have always two or three.

too feeble to compass it. However, she appeared pleased when you read it : well, that is something. I am afraid, notwithstanding that, she does not mend, by your making no mention of it ; you would not have failed to give me some comfort, was it possible. And you desire me not to write to her again yet a while : did my letter effect her then ? I am born for her torment ! They think me mad here ; and, I find, set people to watch me : but no matter, I shall not fail to be at our rendezvous ; and leave the house while the family is at dinner, lest any thing should prevent me, if I delayed. I will wander in your neighbourhood till evening. Farewell, and best assured of my friendship.

L E T T E R

## LETTER XCII.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Chevalier de GERAC.

WHAT a scene! what a scene! at once, terrible and tender! I have not been able, so much was I affected by it, to give you, before now, an account of my visit to Madame de Syrcè. I have been stupified; scarce knowing myself or others ever since. But this morning they bring me word, that the dear creature has had a tolerable night. There is once more then, a glimmering of hope. I will profit of it, and make use of the little spirits it affords me, in order, if I can, to write to you.

My poor love was imagined to be at the last extremity; she had fainted several times during the day, and it was thought the night would be fatal. By force of intreaties, I had prevailed upon one of her women to promise to convey me into  
her



her chamber, unknown to the family. In the evening, the entrance was no way difficult, as, about seven o'clock, Madame de Sancerre always retired, for a short time, to her own apartment; and the porter, fatigued with answering the bell all day, was generally asleep in his lodge. However I have some suspicions, that if Madame de Sancerre did not directly authorize my admittance, the idea of doing her daughter good, made her wink at a step, which was not taken intirely without her knowledge.

Be this as it may, an hour after it was dark, I came, wrapt in my great coat, to the door of the hotel. I did not knock, by agreement; and had not waited there many minutes, when, by a signal from a window, I was apprised of some one's descending to let me in. It was the girl whom I had engaged in my interest. She opened the door softly, and led me up a pair of back stairs.

On entering the sick chamber, I thought I was going into a tomb; and should have been

been happy at that moment to have found one. I approached the bed, and threw myself on my knees by the side of it. The maid drew back the curtains, and, by the light of a distant candle, I discovered such a heart-breaking object! but words cannot describe it! Madame de Syrcè lay with her cheek a little turned upon her pillow: I could hardly hear her breathe, but now and then by short catches; and she seemed to have scarce an hour's existence. After some moments gazing upon her, I took one of her hands, which lay out upon the quilt, covered it with kisses, and pressed it to my heart. Roused by my tears, which she felt, and the broken sobs, which, in spite of myself, escaped me, the expiring angel opened her eyes, and fixed them upon me with a look that never will quit my memory. The maid had now brought the candle, and stood at my elbow.

“Are you there?” said she, in a low, faltering voice, “is it you? happy, happy.” Then raising herself a little, and inclin-

inclining her face towards mine, "I have lived criminal," said she; "but I die contented; Heaven has pardoned me, and I pardon you." "You pardon me?" cried I: "live then." "No," answered she, "I shall die, I must die; the wretch I carry is dead already; I feel it: but do you live, and think of me, and defend my memory." She then endeavoured to raise my hand, which she pressed in her's, in order, as I thought, to kiss it; but in the moment, she fell back in one of those cruel swoons; and, before I knew where I was, the maid forced me out of the chamber, apprehending the return of Madame de Sancerre; who, in effect, a loud cry, which I could not suppress on seeing her daughter faint, brought in immediately after.

Distracted, thunder-struck, not knowing whither I would go, in turning a passage, which I thought led to the hall, I found myself in the nursery, with Madame de Syrcè's children. Two women who attended them, seemed surprized, and, I believe,

lieve, were terrified at my looks; but I immediately recollected myself sufficiently to quit them; and feigning to have come in on purpose, I went up to the little boy, who stood melancholy in a corner, and found him bathed in tears. I asked him what was the matter? he said, "Poor mamma was going to Heaven." I said, "I hoped not yet;" and turned away, unable to bear the innocent creature's grief, which was writ in characters almost incompatible with his age. The other two infants were playing together on a cushion, as yet too young to have any idea of the misfortune with which they were threatened. I took both in my arms. The youngest girl put her's about mine, and called me "her other papa." I endeavoured to answer their prattle; but a burst of sorrow coming suddenly upon me, frightened them, set them a crying; and I was obliged to put them down, and make my escape from the house as fast as I was able.

I then thought of the Duke, that vile duke, who is at once the murderer of  
 Madame

Madame de Syrcè, of Hamilton, of me !  
The villain is returned to Paris ; and I  
think I should have fought him sword in  
hand, but for my extreme weakness.

I don't know whether I have informed  
you that poor Hamilton has entered a Con-  
vent of Carmelites near Dijon.

P. S. Since writing the above, I am  
grown much calmer. Madame de Syrcè is  
not dead, nor at all worse than she was  
last night. Who knows but Heaven may  
have pity, or at least measure in its jus-  
tice ? If she dies, I shall think myself the  
most guilty of men, and shall certainly be  
the most severely punished.

L E T.



## LETTER XCIII.

From Madame de SANCERRE to the  
Marquis de SYRCE.

**Y**OU tell me in your letter, that, as soon as you received my answer, you will set off for Paris : I beg of you, my dear Marquis, not to think of it. To what purpose, when your coming can do no good ? Your wife is past all hopes in this world ! Alas ! in vain had I dependence on her youth, her fortitude. We must resolve, hard as it is, (God only knows how hard for me,) we must resolve to part with her.

It is now the eighth day that I have not lain down without my cloaths. All I could do, I have done ; and scarcely left her a moment ; nor has she, indeed, cared to have me a moment out of her sight ; but while I write, she knows nobody. Heaven grant me grace and strength of mind to  
support

support and submit to the severity of its decrees.

Yesterday she sent for the children. They were all with her upon the bed. Poor helpless little ones! I could not bear the sight; and was obliged to withdraw into another apartment, for fear of alarming them. "Love your papa," said she to Louis; "always respect him: endeavour "to deserve his favour, and he will be "good to you." "Where are you going, mamma," said Marianne, sobbing, when she kissed and parted with the dear creature; "won't you take me with you?" All the children wept bitterly when they were carried out of the room.

Till the violence of her disorder affected her head, she supported herself with surprising magnanimity. Far from wanting comfort, she comforted others. For my own part in particular, I know not whether I should now be alive, but for the consolation I have derived from her counsels and behaviour. What qualities that we have been too little acquainted with,

She

She has, with a Christian fervency, fulfilled all the duties enjoined by the church. These things greatly soften the bitterness of my misfortunes. God, (we have no room to doubt it,) God, that is just and merciful, will pardon her faults, in favour of her virtues.

I shewed her your kind letter; she seemed greatly affected by it; and the day before yesterday, delivered me the inclosed for you, sealed up. I know nothing of the contents. Be comforted, my dear Marquis; your children I shall consider as my own; while I live, they shall not know the loss of a mother. If there appears any unexpected change for the better, I shall immediately send you an express; for in that case only I would have you come up.

But one-and-twenty years old yesterday! Cut off in the very bloom and glory of her days! while I, whose years began to be a burthen to me, am spared! Oh, vanity of human life! beauty, youth, wit, what are you! but too often so many  
 snares

snare for the unwary possessors ; dangerous embellishments ! too often the destruction of those you adorn ! yet we must not murmur, we must not complain : the ways of Providence are unsearchable !

I am called into the sick chamber by Madame Breval. That worthy friend joins her assiduities to mine, and quits not my daughter an instant. Poor dear ! who ever knew her, that did not love her ? and who that has known her, but will mourn for her ? Since her illness, the door has been besieged from all quarters, messages to enquire after her.

L E T.

## LETTER XCIV.

From the Marchioness de SYRCE, to her  
Husband the Marquis.

**I** AM going to appear before a judge whom  
I cannot believe inexorable. Before I  
give him an account, I owe the truth to  
you.

I should not have been able to support  
your presence here; I am therefore glad  
you are absent. You owe me no regard;  
and, for that reason, I desire you will not  
lament me. It would look ill in the eye  
of the world, to shew a sorrow for my  
death, which it does not merit. I shall  
not enter into a detail of my crime, nor  
endeavour to make you comprehend my  
sufferings and repentance. I know a dis-  
position like your's can take no pleasure in  
revange.

Of one thing, however, I ought to in-  
form you, that, as death alone can snatch  
me from shame, it is that alone can put a



period to my guilt. It is therefore an instance of bounty in the Almighty to deliver me from myself and the world. I hope it is a mark of his forgiveness; and, if in dying, I feel any pain, it is chiefly on account of that which I have caused, and shall cause.

Pardon me. I shall have it in my power to offend you no more. I shall soon be insensible, even to remorse. Probably, in a few hours, nothing will remain of me but a piece of cold and inanimate earth. Do not hate my memory.

May you live many years, and be happier than I could have made you. Love our children; console my mother. I have occasioned her much affliction; some one should make her amends. While I write this, which is my last effort, I feel myself dying. The tomb is already open to receive me; already I descend; and I quit all for ever; and leave nothing behind me, but the title of

**A GUILTY WIFE.**

**L E T.**

## LETTER XCV.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Chevalier de GERAC.

**T**HERE's an end of every thing!  
'Tis all over. I have seen her  
corpse; I have seen her coffin. Madame  
de Syrcè is no more. You will hardly  
think I am now in a state to write to you.  
You are mistaken. While there were hopes,  
I had not a moment's quiet; but despair  
has fixed me: or, am I one of those har-  
dened criminals that murder without feel-  
ing? No matter. I am what I am. She  
is gone; and there is no remedy. Gone  
to those angels of which she was a copy;  
gone to enjoy, in another world, that  
happiness, of which my infernal passions  
robbed her in this! But to the subject of  
my letter.

She was better, as I believed. I writ  
you word so. I felt a momentary satis-  
faction. The hope was false. A transient

gleam of an expiring light, a sepulchral fire, the omen of death, deceived us. I had not heard from her all day. I was particularly desired not to send, and deterred by the promise of a message, if any thing extraordinary occurred. I grew uneasy in the evening. I walked out; and was led insensibly towards the hotel. I stopt, at some distance, to consider it; when I observed several people come up to the door, and heard a rap, which convinced me the knocker was no longer tied up. I approached with precipitation; and, death to my eyes and heart! saw three men supporting a coffin. The door was opened. They entered, and I after them.

Every thing had an air of desolation. The fire was extinguished in the hall; at one end of which (in an armed chair) the first object I distinguished was the porter, leaning on his elbow, with a handkerchief to his eyes. A little boy opened the door. I only asked, when the men were past, if Madame de Syrcè was dead? to which he answered, Yes, Sir. The porter then rising,

rising, went to conduct the coffin-bearers along a passage that led to the back stairs; and I, without molestation or interrogatories, walked up the great stair-case to the apartments of the dear deceased. Having a peruke over my hair, it seems the boy took me for a physician that had been sent for to Madame de Sancerre.

I stood a few minutes at the door without daring to open it. At length, some one approaching on the other side, I ventured to turn the lock, and saw Madame Breval coming out. At sight of me, she gave a loud shriek, and fell at the threshold. I did not attempt to take her up; but walked forward. I was, I know not how, stupified and amazed. I felt all my senses, as it were, bound up. I saw without seeing; heard without hearing; in short, had such a confused consciousness of my being, and the objects about me, as those wretches describe who come out of epileptic fits!

I was in the middle of the room before any one perceived me, notwithstanding the noise which Madame Breval had made; for

Madame de Sancerre, who would see her once more ere she was put into her coffin, had entered a few minutes before, and was fallen into a swoon. Several women surrounded her. Poor Sophy ! who, while she was assisting the most unfortunate of mother's, did nothing but weep and wring her hands, was the first that spy'd me. " Oh God !" cry'd she, " Monsieur le Comte, what brings you here ? Begone, begone, for Heaven's sake ! we are undone enough already." Her words sounded hollow in my ears, as if they came from a voice at a distance ; for, looking forward, my eyes were, at that instant, struck with an object that drew my very soul towards it in an agony of grief and despair.

The bed of my expired love appeared to my view, with all the curtains drawn back, where her body lay cold and breathless, under a coverlid of white satin. They had dressed the corpse in a shroud of the same. Her face did not appear at all disfigured, and had so little of the paleness



ness of death upon it, that you would have said, she slumbered in effect. Putting Sophy aside, who endeavoured to prevent my approaching her bed, I cry'd out, "She is not dead ; she breathes yet !" and threw myself by the side of the body which I caught in my arms.

The surprize of the women was at first so great, that they knew not well what they saw ; all, except Sophy, who kept pulling me from the body, but in vain. My behaviour was that of a madman. I kissed the cold face ; put the hands in my bosom ; endeavoured to re-animate the lifeless trunk by breathing upon its lips ; I even spoke to it, as if it was yet capable of hearing me. "Alas! Sir," cry'd Sophy, "don't you see she's dead?" And who killed her ! cry'd I, looking up at her in a desperate phrenzy. I then turned again to the body, burst into a flood of tears, tore my hair, beat my head and breast, and only wanted a weapon to put an immediate end to my miserable being.

During this interval, Madame Breval had recovered from her fall, and, running to the bell, began to ring it violently. "Monster!" exclaimed she, "is it not enough that you have murdered her! but you must pursue her beyond the grave! Have you no respect for her memory; for this unfortunate mother, who is likely to be involved in the fate you have brought upon the daughter?" "Where is she?" said I, rising, (for I had quite forgot that Madame de Sancerre was in the room); "where is Madame de Sancerre? I would have her come here, and see me expire by her daughter's side; her daughter, of whom you say I have been the assassin! I will be my own assassin too! Give me a sword! a knife! and see whether I shall deceive you! Here I am. Call her relations! her friends! her servants! Let them do justice upon me! I shall not oppose them! My life is a burthen to me!"—With these words, I grew again frantic, and, starting from the bed towards the chimney, caught

caught at one of the irons; but, at the same instant, several men entering, (who were brought from below by the ringing of the bell, and the screams of the women) five or six of them laid hands on me at once. It was impossible to extricate myself; yet I struggled hard; and observing, as they were carrying me away, that Madame de Sancerre was come to herself, I called to her to help me. "They are forcing me from your daughter!" cry'd I. "I would bring her to life, or die with her; and they won't let me! Do you not know me? 'Tis I, St. Albin; the unfortunate St. Albin, that speaks to you?"

In this manner was I forced down stairs, more like a wild beast than a man. However, the fellows offered me no injury; and bringing me into a chamber in the lower court, I there found my friend the Abbè St. Maure, who has been a long time a sort of spiritual governor in Madame Sancerre's family.

I beg'd he would protect me ! I did not know where I was, or what I was saying. They obliged me to drink a glass of wine and water ; and the Abbè, desiring we might be left alone, begun to talk to me ; soothed my grief, but condemned the violence of it. When he saw I was somewhat restored, he represented, in the strongest colours, the injury I was doing Madame de Syrcè's memory. That brought a shower of tears from me. I own'd I was to blame, and entreated him to make my excuses to Madame de Sancerre for the disorders I had occasioned in her house.

He advised me to go home ; he even offered to accompany me thither. I would fain have been excused from accepting his civility, but he would admit no denial ; and, sending for a hackney-coach, we immediately got into it ; and he set me down at my father's.

To the attention of this good man in not quitting me, is probably owing that I am alive to write to you. Two days are elapsed since the fatal catastrophe. I shall  
not

not attempt to tell you how I have pass'd them. I have now but one duty to fulfil; and then will prepare to leave the world for ever. Adieu.

## L E T T E R XCVI.

From the Chevalier de GERAC to Madame  
SANCERRE.

**T**HE friendship, the bosom-confidence, which, from our infancy upwards, has subsisted between the now-disconsolate, yet intentionally innocent, author of a late most tragical catastrophe in your family, must plead my apology for the intrusion of this address.—Indeed, Madam, I should hold myself wanting in the duty I owe to the Count de St. Albin, as well as in the regard, the veneration I entertain for you, and for the memory of your amiable daughter, the late Marchion. de Syrcè, were I not (while I mingle my tears with those of a mother distracted at the untimely loss of the darling object of her affection)



to give her every possible assurance of the heart-felt love—I will even add, the virtuous esteem—which the wretchedest of men bore for one who . . . . But I forbear . . . . To open afresh your yet bleeding wounds, would be to shew my cruelty, when I only mean to express my condolence.

Released from all earthly sorrows, happy is Madame de Syrcè! Unhappy only are they who knew her, and have survived her!—But ah, St. Albin! how shall I describe thy condition? how express thy thoughts, thy feelings?—Ill-fated youth! into what a gulph of misery art thou plunged?—Ever a sport of the passions, yet ever a man of virtue in principle—ever anxious to receive the salutary counsels, the prudent directions, of thy faithful Gerac—why, oh! why, were those counsels, those directions neglected, fatally neglected, till they could no longer be of avail?—Deluded instrument of another's crimes! Why, deaf to the voice of friendship, didst thou listen to his infernal

nal projects?—These were gilded over, it is true, with all the alluring colours, all the false, though plausible arguments which vice so often employs as unerring engines in seducing and corrupting the bosom of unexperienced innocence.—And shall this miscreant, who lives but to destroy—this monster! who, though a disgrace to humanity, is yet the delight, the admiration, of *certain* circles, remain unpunished on earth?—No! 'twere impiety to suppose it. He is a wretch unworthy to live; but ah! is he not at the same time a villain unfit to die?—Be it my task to load his memory with all the infamy due to consummate perfidy and guilt; to render, in a word, the very name of *Clermont* as detestable as its present owner deserves to be.

Pardon this digression, Madam. My indignation keeps pace with my sorrow; and I could not suppress it.—At some future period—when I hope time shall have mitigated the present excesses of your grief, and pious resignation shall have succeeded to maternal anguish—I will venture

ture to submit to your perusal a few of the many papers already in my possession, which bear undeniable testimony, that the Count de St. Albin and Madame de Syrcè were rather objects of pity than of blame; that, in fine, a chain of fatal circumstances concurring, they fell an united victim to machinations which the most abandoned libertine alone could have either planned or executed.

All I shall add at present is, that I feel for the sorrows of Madame de Sancerre, as if they were the sorrows of my own bosom; and that with all possible respect, I have the honour to be, &c.

LET-

## L E T T E R XCVII.

From the Count de ST. ALBIN to the  
Chevalier de GERAC.

WITH hands yet tinged with a traitor's blood, I eagerly snatch the pen, and greet my beloved friend!—Alas!—But my mind *will* indulge itself in chimeras—alas! could I but flatter myself, that there were on earth a second Gerac—again would I wish to preserve my present existence—again would I welcome the pleasures of society.—Society!—let me not name it, let me not think of it!—Enough have I done, (but ah! what have I not suffered!) enough have I done to merit an eternal exile from it!

Oh! what complicated misery is mine!  
—My poor Hamilton!—Reared to adversity from her cradle, and with a heart and soul wrapped up in mine,—was it for me  
—the only comfort she had left on earth,  
—for me, the idol of her heart—to ruin  
her

her peace for ever, to—I am distracted, and know not what I would say. Just were the punishment I now suffer for my base perfidy, my unprovoked cruelty, to one who had a just claim to all my love, had not my ever-to-be-adored Marchioness—that blessed martyr to my crimes—been fatally involved in the effects of it!—But Clermont is no more.—Thank Heaven, I now am not entirely without consolation!—Yes, my friend, Omnipotence gave a sanction to my just revenge, and permitted me, worthless wretch as I am! to terminate the days of the veriest monster that ever existed!—Clermont, I say, is no more.—But my spirits are so agitated, that I must take breath.—Anon, I will give you the particulars.

\* \* \* \* \*

Soon as I had recovered from the stupor of grief in which I remained for some days after my love expired, I ordered my carriage; and, attended with only one faithful servant, drove to the Duke's seat at ———. Pleased to find he was at home,



home, I sent up my name, and obtained immediate admittance.—Advancing to salute me with an hypocritical smile, and an air of levity, as usual, I started back, and desired him to stand aloof.—“Clermont!” added I, “this is no friendly visit. I am come, Sir, to demand satisfaction for the irreparable injuries done to Madame de Syrcè, done to Mademoiselle Hamilton, done to myself. For these, your life or mine—perhaps the life of both, must answer.” The wretch seemed appalled at the firmness with which I expressed myself; for though I paused, he still remained silent.—Stepping to the door, I beckoned him to follow me; which he did with a countenance full of horror, till we reached the bottom of a long solitary walk. I then turned round; and unsheathing my sword, desired him to prepare. Conscious, no doubt, of his manifold crimes, his horror now increased—his tongue faltered, his hands shook, his legs tottered; while I, though loaded with offences, yet compared with my antagonist

tagonist, an innocent character, stood before him perfectly undisturbed, and calmly waiting for the issue. To my great satisfaction, Clermont remarked my behaviour, and even expressed his astonishment at it. Still, however—for cowardice is the inseparable attendant of guilt—still, however, did he testify a reluctance to draw.—But that he deserved not my pity, I could have dropped a tear at sight of the agony of his situation. I actually found myself inclining to relent; and, fearing lest, by a farther delay, I should be utterly unmanned, I sternly commanded him that instant to make his peace with Heaven. This menace had the desired effect. At length he drew; the engagement began; and, after a few passes, victory declared in my favour. On examination, I found I had run him through the heart, from which the blood flowed in a torrent; and in less than a minute, he breathed his last at my feet, without a groan.

Thus have I executed part of my fixed determination. When the other is effected,

ed,

ed, you shall hear from me again. Pity me, and pray for me.—Adieu!

## A B I L L E T

From the Count de ST. ALBIN, to the  
Chevalier de GERAC.

**E**RE this last tribute of affectionate regard for the best of friends, and the worthiest of men, can have reached his hands, the hitherto unfortunate St. Albin, immured within the venerable, holy walls of the monastery of ———, will have formally renounced all the vanities of this world—will have devoted himself to the worship of his Maker, to the performance of the sacred duties of his order, and to a sincere and contrite repentance of all his past indiscretions, follies, and transgressions.—With Mr. P——, the banker, I have left an instrument constituting you the heir of the greatest part of my

my fortune. The remainder I have allotted for charitable purposes; and I have only to add, as my last request, that you will see it disposed of agreeably to my directions.—Then farewell! my ever dear Gerac!—till we meet in the blissful regions above—a long, a last farewell!

THE END.



